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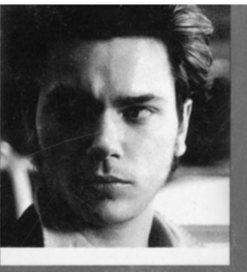

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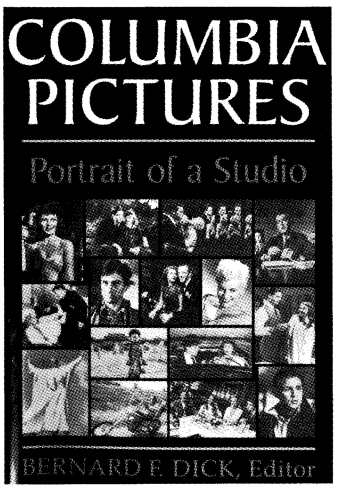

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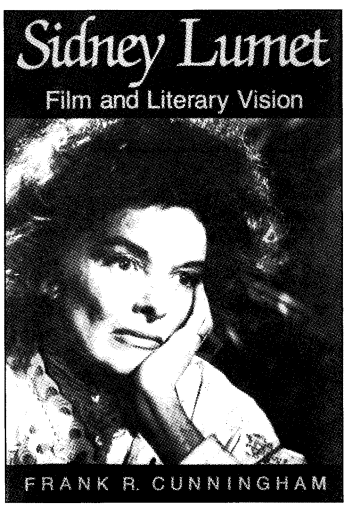

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Orson Welles (left) and Charlton Heston in *Touch of Evil*

Orson

Introduction by Jonathan Rosenbaum

The following document—an "outtake" from *This is Orson Welles* by Orson Welles and Peter Bogdanovich, a book I recently edited for HarperCollins—is excerpted from a 58-page memo written by Welles to Edward Muhl, the Universal Pictures studio chief, in 1957. The excerpting was carried out by Welles and Bogdanovich in the early 1970s for *This is Orson Welles* as part of a larger chronology of the making of *Touch of Evil*, only portions of which can be given here. (Unfortunately, I haven't seen the original, uncut memo and can't comment on the missing material.)

After shooting on *Touch of Evil* concluded on April 2, 1957, editing and dubbing under Welles' supervision, mainly with Virgil Vogel, continued until Welles flew to New York on June 6 to appear on Steve Allen's TV show. When he returned, a new editor, Aaron Stell, had been assigned by the studio to the picture, and Welles was asked to let him work alone. After Welles quarreled with post-production head Ernest Nims about when he could start shooting a few inserts needed for narrative clarity, and Muhl decided to look at the rough cut for the first time, Welles left for Mexico around June 29th to work on his *Don Quixote*. Objecting to the rapid crosscutting between scenes in the first five reels, Muhl assigned Nims to recut these reels. Welles returned from Mexico and viewed Nims' cut in late August; he returned to Mexico for more work on *Quixote* in September and October.

After screening the new cut on November 4, Muhl decided that brief additional shooting was needed to clarify the storyline, and by mid-November the film's star, Charlton Heston, was informed that Universal didn't want Welles to carry out this work, which was scheduled for the 18th. After some communications with Welles, Heston canceled the shoot at his own expense (just over $8,000), but after further deliberations agreed to cooperate a day later, with Harry Keller directing.

Later that month, after the new scenes were cut into the film, Welles was shown the results, and on the basis of this single screening and his copious note-taking, he wrote the 58-page memo which is excerpted below, a copy of which he sent to Heston. Soon afterwards, he sent Heston the following letter:

"Dearest Chuck,

"I got a wire last night from Muhl, stating that Nims is working on the 'majority' of the changes requested in my memo, and asking me to turn up on Wednesday for dubbing. What interpretation are we to put on this?

"a. They are afraid I won't come for dubbing unless they promise to make the changes.

"b. A certain throbbing of war drums has reached their ears at last, and they intend to make a convincing show of cooperating with my suggestions in the hope of spiking my guns, in the event of any future battle.

"c. Utter demoralization. Hundreds are being fired from the studio, and the rumors of Muhl's joining them continue to spread. In such an atmosphere of decay and

Welles' Memo to Universal

despair, maybe the sheer force of energy—which they now see I am prepared to put into this fight—has awed them into momentary compliance.

"d. Another possibility is that the very evident constructive spirit of my memo . . . amounts to a strong weapon which they do not wish to have used against them. . . .

"e. The last possibility (and, I think, the least likely!) is that they have all been genuinely converted to the suggestions in the memo and are hastening to put the 'majority' into effect.

"Obviously, at this point, our cue is to play it straight. They deserve no thanks for their expressed willingness to follow the main lines of the memo. If, in fact, they do so, it will not constitute a personal favor to me; nothing but the good of the picture has ever been at issue. I shall make my loops and wait and see. It's up to them. The big question, of course, is just what the 'majority' will really turn out to be. In fact, there were no bargaining points in that memo of mine. It represented my notion of the minimum number of improvements necessary. It's my fear that their execution of these changes will leave something to be desired, since they may be acting without much enthusiasm, but most importantly, because they will be working in great haste. . . ."

Unfortunately, Welles was right, and further scenes were deleted from the picture before it opened without press shows the following February, in a 93-minute version. Eighteen more years would pass before a 108-minute version containing these deleted scenes (including footage shot by Keller) was found at Universal and made available, in 1976—a longer version that has now effectively supplanted the one originally released on both film and video, although, *pace* Leonard Maltin, it cannot be called "Welles' original version," which, properly speaking, never existed. (For clarification of certain differences between the two existing versions, see Terry Comito's 1985 *Touch of Evil* volume in the Rutgers *Films in Print* series.)

To my mind, the value and interest of the following document largely rest in the rare glimpse it offers of some of Welles' artistic intentions and strategies as he saw them himself. One obvious difficulty in following all the arguments today stems from the fact that the version of the film discussed here is neither the 93-minute original release nor the 108-minute rerelease but a rough cut we no longer have access to; but for anyone very familiar with the film, I think most of the issues at stake remain fairly legible.

In the excerpts that follow, the bracketed comments and those in italics are by Peter Bogdanovich, although I have taken the liberty of expanding them to clarify which details are present in the currently available 108-minute version.

JONATHAN ROSENBAUM

■ Jonathan Rosenbaum is film critic of the *Chicago Reader* and editor of *This Is Orson Welles*, by Orson Welles and Peter Bogdanovich, published by HarperCollins in October, 1992.

. . . Resigned as I am to the fact that a great majority of my previous notes and suggestions have been disregarded, the case of the scene between Grandi [Akim Tamiroff] and Susan [Janet Leigh] is one of the few issues I feel justified in reopening. This scene is just exactly a thousand percent more effective played, as it was first arranged, in two parts, with a cutaway to the scene of the explosion between those two parts.

No matter how the scene is edited, this scene has—and was intended to have—a curious, rather inconclusive quality. It was written that way and directed and played that way. The audience is presented with a menacing villain who does not, in fact, succeed in being very menacing after all. He takes a threatening tone with Susan, but as it turns out, his threats are vague and the audience must begin to realize (if the scene works at all) that he's actually more frightened than frightening. Dividing this scene in two parts, as we intended, and keeping the situation with Vargas at the scene of the explosion "alive" in the audience's mind, is not to confuse but to clarify. Making a short contrapuntal reference to what is going on across the border underlines and precisely illustrates the correct values. Absolutely nothing is gained by gluing these two parts together, except to make the total scene seem rather long and rather shapeless. The shooting was done, for the most part, on location, certain reverses and close-ups having been picked up in the studio. Now I did not allow in shooting these for a version in two parts, and hence, there is no available footage for continuous action. As the editing now stands, the welding of these two parts has been managed with as much skill as the resources in actual film made possible, and I congratulate whoever made the attempt. It remains, however, just that: an attempt. . . .

When photography falls sharply below a particular standard, cameramen say that the scene shot is not "commercial." They do not, of course, mean that it is too "artistic" for the commercial market, but that the physical quality of the film is not up to the ordinary minimum standards generally required for exhibition. The sort of editing it was necessary to resort to in the attempt to force these two parts of a sequence into the form of a single scene can only be described in the same way: as film cutting, it is simply *not commercial.* . . . The cut by which we returned to Grandi (after a brief visit to the scene of the explosion) with his violent movement towards the mirror and the line: *"We used to have a nice quiet town around here!"*—was also a very good cut indeed. Both were exceptionally effective and cry out to be restored. . . . If I'd been one of your number during the editorial discussions, I should know whom to address on this question which I consider to be so important. As it is, I can only plead with whoever it was who championed the notion that these two scenes be joined together as one—plead that since all other rearrangements in all these opening sequences are now fixed in an acceptable form, the Grandi-Susan scene be re-examined with an open mind. No great effort will be needed to find the proper footage for intercutting from the wealth of material available from the various scenes which play by the flaming car. It's my opinion that the entrance of Quinlan should be saved for this. I think that moving the conflict between Quinlan and Vargas closer to the street scene in front of the hotel will aid clarity and much improve the narrative line. But this is only one of several solutions. Quinlan's arrival through his line, *"Whoever did it, ye jackass,"* and the cut of the blazing car would also make a most effective transition. You would then return to Grandi (by a quick dissolve, if you prefer) for his line, *"We used to have a nice quiet town around here!"* This would play beautifully. The subject of Grandi's anxiety would have been dramatically illustrated, we would not have left the scene of the explosion until after all our principals had been established, and the device of cutting away from Quinlan (clearly the most significant figure to appear since the entrance, at the start of the film, of the leading man and leading woman) would pique the audience interest without the remotest danger of confusion. This is in the best, classic tradition of movie continuity, the clinching virtue of which is the fact that in this arrangement we would never stay away from either story—Susan's or Vargas's—long enough to lose their separate but relating threads of interest. . . .

What's vital is that both stories—the leading man's and the leading woman's—be kept equally and continuously alive; each scene, as we move back and forth across the border, should play at roughly equal lengths leading up to the moment at the hotel when the lovers meet again. . . . No point concerning anything in the picture is made with such urgency and such confidence as this. Do

please—please give it a fair try. [*This change was not made.*]

At the end of the Grandi scene, there is a new trim which is by no means an improvement. In almost every instance of this kind—that is to say, where there's simply a difference of taste between your editing and mine—I have resigned myself to the futility of discussion, and will spare you my comments. In most cases, I can see, or guess, the point of view which has motivated the change, even when I don't happen, personally, to agree with it. But in some few instances, the point of view remains completely mysterious to me, and in those cases where the improvement is not apparent, and where I cannot fathom the reasons for alteration, I'm registering, as I do here, my objections. This matter of the "trim" isn't a vital issue one way or the other, but since it took me some considerable work on the moviola to decide on the precise frame to cut away from the Grandi street scene, and again, to pick up Vargas and the others near the hotel, I find it hard to resist pointing out that the new version—though the idea behind it may well be superior—displays a much hastier craftsmanship. . . . [*This was attended to.*]

We now come to the first additional dialogue: the new scene between Susan and Vargas. . . .

In the light of the decision to deny me permission to direct these scenes, to write the dialogue for them or to collaborate in that writing, or indeed even to be present during your discussions of the matter, I must, of course, face the strong probability that I am the very last person whose opinion will be likely to carry any weight with you. I am, therefore, limiting myself to points which might genuinely interest you—points which seem to me to interfere quite actively with the story itself, and tend to confuse the narrative line. Without going into any question of quality in the actual writing of the dialogue for this added scene in the hotel lobby, I think two points are truly confusing to the simple mechanics of the plot, and this, I suggest, could very probably be fixed by the simple process of dubbing slightly different lines over the scene. To begin with the less important point: Vargas tells his wife to be sure and lock the door to her room. Yet, we will see him later opening this door by a simple turn of the knob. Since she has been genuinely frightened and disturbed, it is a little hard to understand why she has chosen to disregard her husband's good advice. As the film now stands, his injunction about the door locking is the last thing she hears from him before going to the nearby room, and it isn't easy to see how she could possibly have forgotten it during the course of that short walk. In the original version, the question of the door being locked is simply not raised. Bringing Susan to the door to unlock it would have changed the basic action in the scene in the hotel room and made Vargas's semi-comic confusion in the darkness unworkable. Thus, he was through the door and into the room before the audience could have time to think about the question of Susan's locking it at all. Anyone who wished to be sharply analytical could have assumed that she had simply neglected to do this—a foolish but not really an idiotic mistake. However, if her husband has *told* her to lock the door, her failure to do so is underlined, and the audience, forced to think about the whole door-locking business, is given a choice between blaming the director for carelessness, or considering that the character played by the leading lady is flighty to the point of feeble-mindedness.

The second point about this new scene in the hotel lobby is, I think, a more important one and has to do with reference to *"those boys."* Unfortunately, since this new dialogue was never sent to me, I do not have the exact text and was unable, during a single running of the picture, to write it down in the projection room. The substance, however, of what is said at this point would seem to be that Susan has been impressed by the existence of what she describes as *"those boys"* or *"those kids."* I believe Vargas also directly refers to them in some such terms. The purpose here, one presumes, was to establish the gang of delinquents, on the face a good idea. But a real difficulty presents itself in terms of logic: *Susan has not seen this gang at all and neither has the audience.* True, one boy directed her attention towards the photograph, but he could only impress her (and the audience) as being one of several people in the street. As yet, there has been no impression given at all of a group of *"kids."* Susan and the audience would remember "Pancho," some old men, a woman with a baby, and Grandi. Of these, of course, Pancho and Grandi will impress themselves as the significant figures. In other words, we have established a middle-aged gangster and his young henchman, and beyond that, a general, rather vague impression of Mexicans of all differ-

ent ages and types obviously bearing no special meaning in the story. "Sal" will appear later and so will "Risto." Only in the scene in the street between Grandi and these three boys will the actual existence of a gang of youths begin to impress itself. This talk of "boys" and "kids" is almost certainly going to have the effect of confusing the audience. If Susan and Vargas had emphasized *Grandi,* the conversation would be clear. As it is, the natural reaction will be to wonder, "What kids are they talking about?" . . . It poses a question in the audience's mind which cannot logically be answered at a point in the story when we must agree that the slightest sense of bewilderment may spark an irritation and produce that chain reaction of bewilderment which leads so often to a lack of interest. Thus, in the strongest terms possible, I want to urge that you consider this point on its merits. . . . If I could have the text of this new scene, I would be most happy to work on it, and present you immediately with suggested alterations in the dialogue. You will prefer, I suppose, to accomplish this on your own and without any direct collaboration on my part. But do please give the question some thought. [*Both these lines of dialogue were altered.*]

Some specific problems are posed by the introduction of the new scene in the hotel lobby concerning which I simply cannot bring myself to keep silent. The excuse for this added scene, I take it, is clarification of the plot, and perhaps, too, the value of added footage for Miss Leigh and Mr. Heston. But, in terms of the characters they play, and their relationship to each other, I must insist that, as far as the author is concerned—(and for whatever remnant of interest may be attached to his opinion)—this particular new scene goes directly against the intentions of the script, and the original line of the story. This added dialogue makes the later scene (one of my own), in which Susan packs and stamps out of her hotel room, completely arbitrary. Coming, as this does now, quite without emotional preparation of any kind, we wonder what makes Susan so coldly furious with her husband, and why, when he opens the door, she doesn't simply throw her arms around him and beg him to take her away from this awful place. The new lobby scene leaves our couple in a fairly warm relationship, and with a perfectly rational understanding of each other. True, the young wife states her opposition to hubby's police activities in the course of their honeymoon, but her indignation is expressed in a poutingly "cute" sort of tone (a standard cliché reaction of newlyweds in B pictures). She is, in fact, more hurt than angry; this new scene with her husband actually leaves her fairly well resigned to what, as her husband explains it, is to be a short but necessary operation. Thus, the essential tension between them is totally relaxed: we have nothing "cooking" between these two except a hint of their physical interest in each other and their momentary but inconsequential pang at being parted. The original story line went, briefly, as follows: A honeymoon couple, desperately in love, is abruptly separated by a violent incident (the bombing of the car)—an incident which, although it has no personal bearing on either of them, the man considers as a matter of his urgent professional concern. This feeling of responsibility by Vargas is, of course, an expression of the basic theme of the whole picture; further, his wife's resistance to such masculine idealism, her failure, and even her refusal, to understand is a human and very feminine reaction which any audience can grasp easily and sympathize with. She is, after all, in a foreign country and has been subjected to a series of indignities which irritate and bewilder her and which her husband fails to completely appreciate. Vargas's behavior and her reaction make it necessary to dramatize and underline this temporary misunderstanding between them. By minimizing it, by sweetening their relationship at the wrong moment, and warming it up at precisely that point where the distance separating the man and woman should be at its greatest, there is a sharp loss in dimension, and both Vargas and Susan emerge as stock characters—the sort of routine "romantic leads" to be found in any programme picture.

[*Here is Orson's original scene; it was replaced by the one which, as he put it, "sweetened" the Heston-Leigh relationship.*]

TIGHT TWO SHOT - MIKE AND SUSAN - HOTEL ENTRANCE

MIKE
Darling, let me take you to the hotel.

SUSAN
(as Mike turns to go)
—You mean you're leaving me?

MIKE
(breaking in gently)
I'll be just across the street—I hate leaving you like this, but, after all, I'm working on a case—

She glares at him; then turns to the honky-tonk.

HER VIEWPOINT - FULL SHOT - "GRANDI'S RANCHO" with big cheesecake blow-ups.

BACK TO SCENE

SUSAN
(reading the sign)
"Twenty Sizzling Strippers—" Some case! Who pinned the tin badge on *you*. Fearless Fosdick?

MIKE
Well, Susie—

SUSAN
Oh, for heaven's sake!

MIKE
(breaking off, doing a mild double-take)
Fosdick? Who's he?

SUSAN
(with a sigh)
A corny detective in a comic strip.

She marches indignantly INTO the hotel—

MIKE
Susie—

But she has gone. He sighs and moves across the street.

[*Orson's memo continues*]

The added scene in the hotel cannot have been made in the expectation of reaching a real level of sexiness; its tone is simply *intimate*—the tone of that standard "marital-friendly" relationship with which moviegoers are by now so very familiar. If it was felt that an extended scene between the two was really necessary at this point, then that scene should have been developed along the lines of the gulf widening between a couple passionately in love. This, believe me, is not at all a matter of mere preference on the part of the author of the script and the director of the picture. Here I invoke more than personal opinion; it's a simple fact that what I'm pressing on your acceptance has a very direct bearing on the story line.

The separation of the newlyweds is a vital point in that story line, it is a separation which doesn't come about through the arbitrary mechanics of the detective story, but develops as an organic progression of events implicit in the characters of the people rather than the plot. Woman's classic failure to fully appreciate and sympathize with that sense of abstract duty so peculiar to the male—a sense bearing no relationship to the personal reality of a marriage—is here intensified by the fact that these are honeymooners, that she's American and he a Mexican. Their separation, too, is directly the result of a sort of "border incident" in which the interests of their two native countries are in some conflict. This is a pretty good story. The underlying sex relationship was, in my opinion, stated with some degree of dramatic truth by developing it, just at this point, in terms of Susan's irritation and Vargas's exasperation: that form of quarreling which is sparked in the very midst of passion.

The later reconciliation in the car was intended as a climax to this particular phase of the story. Without the right preparation this makes no impact as a reconciliation but is merely another scene. The leading man and the leading woman cuddle up to each other and kiss; there is neither resolution nor development—just an empty display of snuggling. Now there's no intrinsic merit in a perfectly straightforward honeymoon relationship being interrupted by the machinery of a detective plot. In those terms, the girl would be present in our picture simply to provide "feminine interest" in its most shapeless and ordinary form. But if you're sure you prefer the boy-girl relationship to develop along the routine lines of uncomplicated wifely warmth and husbandly in-

timacy, then Susan's later actions in the bedroom and the manner in which she flings out of the hotel is totally unmotivated.

My promise to withhold direct attack from any of the other added scenes will, I hope, give me the right to hope that you, on your side, will be willing to re-examine this sequence in the light of the objections I've laid before you. Reducing the peculiar angles and sharp edges in this early relationship between Susan and Vargas eliminates whatever might be interesting about the couple. In these opening stages, regardless of any question of individual taste, I'm convinced that one story (mine) or the other (yours) should be told. The attempt to combine them annuls the logic of both.

I can well appreciate your proprietary feelings for this new scene of yours. For my part, I've looked on the rest of the picture (and on the edited version I was so near to finishing last July) with just the same jealous sentiments of ownership. Pride in your own work is also bound to be stiffened by the special circumstances in which that work was carried out. That I was denied even the right of consultation with you is a hard fact strongly hinting that, of all people, I must be the least welcome as a critic. In spite of this—and in fairness to a picture which you now describe as "exceptionally entertaining"—I must ask that you open your mind for a moment to this opinion from the man who, after all, made the picture. [*This change was not made.*]

. . . You must have had some good reason for cutting the footage in which Grandi's tailing operation was made clear to the audience, but after considerable thought, I'm still unable to make any sort of guess as to what those reasons could be. For the close angle of the chase, the plan . . . was for a quite interesting pattern of newscasts to be heard on the radios of the two cars and in the two languages. When Vargas switched stations, there was to be a dreamy, old-fashioned Mexican waltz to take the place of the announcer's excited chatter, and thus underscore our short love scene with a sentimental note, nicely combining "local color" and, in realistic terms, perfectly justified. This pattern was to be rudely broken by the aggressive siren of Quinlan's car, and then—after Vargas's departure in that car—the gently picturesque lullaby would soothe Susan toward sleep as Menzies drove off with her. . . .

This music would also have been useful in relation to the waking up business at the motel, and would all be part of a most intricately worked out sequence in which sirens, dynamite explosions, and various radio voices (including the news flashes in the police car) would play their different roles.

As it stands at present, the editing annihilates the possibility of this sound pattern around which, as a matter of fact, this whole series of closely related scenes was originally designed and photographed. What was meant to be a tour de force in the rather sadly neglected dimension of the sound track now cannot be anything more interesting than a succession of straight plot-scenes, all quite necessary to our story, but of no special value in themselves.

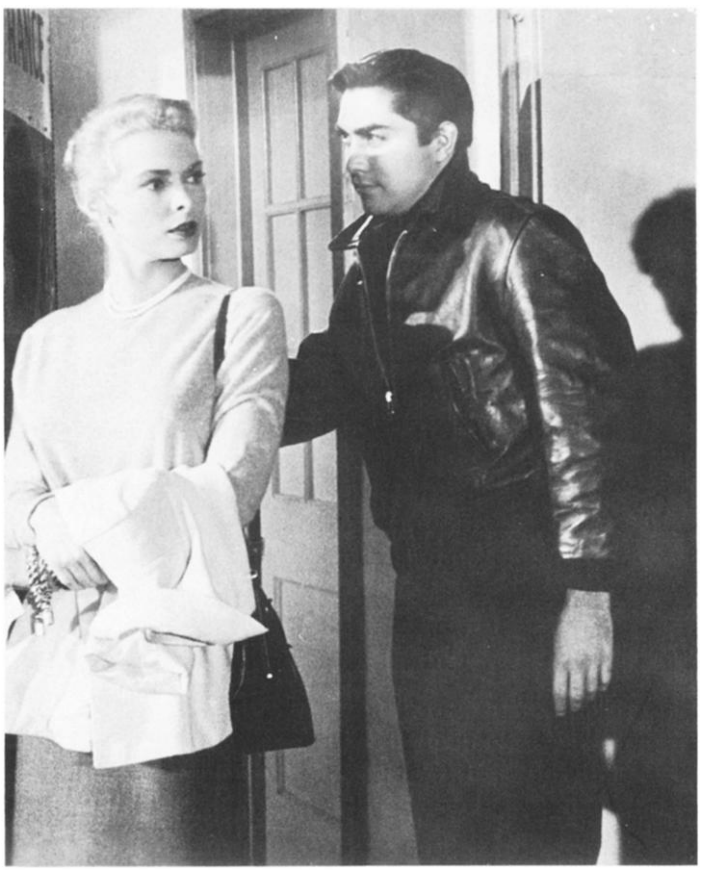
The excision of those quite colorful crane shots which feature Grandi's and Vargas's cars is less to be lamented, but I can't leave the sequence without registering doubts that this cut accomplishes much of anything in terms of pace. Establishing the oil derricks (rather surprising country, in which our closing scenes are played) was of some importance too. The audience, I believe, should be prepared for those derricks. This also was an element in a carefully built-up pattern—in this instance, a visual pattern. . . .

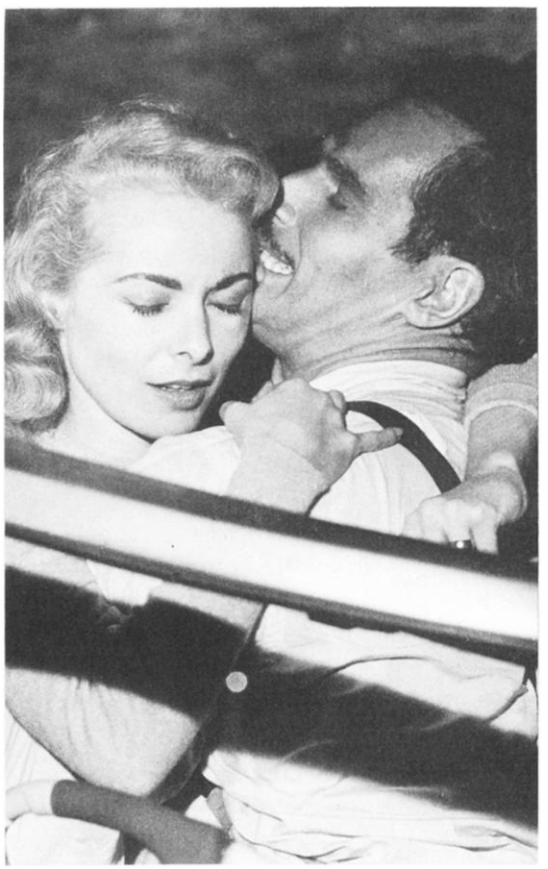
The case of Grandi's following Menzies prompts me to inquire why you've cut all shots of Grandi's pursuit; his hiding when Vargas and Susan stop on the road; his ducking from the police car; and his continued chasing of Vargas's car. If my version was felt to be wrong, there is surely enough material for another editing in which the clarity of this plot point could be further underwritten—in *visual* terms. This would make possible an elimination of some of that nagging and repetitive sound track on the road by the motel. [*None of this was heeded in any way, and in fact more of the Grandi chase sequence was deleted in the release version, thus cutting several important character points.*

In the 108-minute version, part of this material is restored, although the scene of Heston and Leigh in the car—using Welles' dialogue, but virtually none of his design for the material to be heard on the radio—was directed by Harry Keller; and the oil derricks are nowhere in sight—J. R.]

In Susan's scene with [Dennis] Weaver, there is a very curious cut by which his move from above the window to the door is eliminated. This

Touch of Evil





is accomplished by an extreme lengthening of Susan's close-up, while Weaver is heard in a continuous, bewildering chatter off-scene. The close-up is by no means one of Miss Leigh's best, but even if the camera flattered her more than it does in this shot, her reaction, which is one of drowsy reaction, could not, by its very nature, be interesting enough to support such a very extended close-up. More important than this is the fact that what has been chopped out of Weaver's performance is strikingly good material in itself. Further, it prepares for and builds up to the extreme eccentricity of his behavior at the door. Unless we see him stuttering (as he does so magnificently) about his position as night-man—unless we follow his startled, neurotic, scrabbling progress from the position where he's first cornered to the door through which he wants to escape, his sudden wild behavior must strike us with a sort of shock, as being wholly arbitrary. This scene is balanced on a perilously delicate point: the audience simply must have time enough to—so to speak—digest Weaver's character. If they are even slightly rushed in the process, he will seem to be merely phony. Instead of developing as a queerly likeable and diverting sort of zany, he will emerge as an exasperating ham. The simple fact is that "snapping up" or "tightening" any of Weaver's scenes does not help the pace, it only results in a rackety, disjointed effect which is not pace at all, but raw confusion. Here the question of rhythm is absolutely central. Each one of Weaver's scenes was so fully rehearsed, so painstakingly built up in terms of what I can only describe as "sound-pattern" that a single snip of the scissors must bring the whole structure down in noisy ruins. [*This was restored to Welles' version.*]

For the scene between Vargas and Schwartz in the racing car, I was at some pains to make inserts of the car radio. Ordinarily, of course, inserts are not the responsibility of the director, but I regarded these as so important that I made them myself. They should come at the beginning and at the end of this scene. The effect I had in mind has never been seen or heard and, therefore, could not be judged. The scene was to open on the car radio with the announcer recapping the plot in the form of a fragment from an excited news bulletin. Vargas's hand switches from this voice to music—the music being a very gay and extremely fast Mexican march. We then cut to the two-shot of Schwartz and Vargas, who play their scene to the accompaniment of this lively "chase music." This is particularly important because even the second dubbing of the scene failed to eliminate a boxy mechanical quality in the sound track. The background of "chase music" from the radio would do much to fix this and would also offer an amusing, faintly ironic comment on its own. The closing shot of the scene begins with a down angle on the two in the car in which Vargas's hand goes again to the radio. The idea here was for the music to be suddenly raised in volume. Then, when the camera cranes up, and the car pulls violently ahead, there would be an interesting reverse pattern in the sound, with the "chase music" abruptly fading as the car speeds off into the distance. . . . [*This was restored to Welles' version.*]

I take pleasure in reporting my enthusiastic approval of the new scene between Schwartz and Vargas. It's a good photographic match, the cut itself follows smoothly and the new words make a definite contribution to the clarity of the story. . . .

The present arrangement of scenes in the motel—the scenes building up to the attack on Susan—adds up to a sequence having its own simple melodramatic progression, but which, in fact, is quite a meagre substitute for the original plan. . . .

. . . This is a case where a whole sequence of effects depended on the use of music. The film for this was shot strictly within a most precise pattern involving rather special arrangements of sound and silence. The crescendo of suspense was to depend more on the sound track than the images. The decision to shuffle those images in a new, and much more obvious order could never have been made, except in ignorance of this basic scheme. [*This was changed back to Welles' version.*]

. . . The dialogue cuts in the motel office scene may shorten playing time but nothing is accomplished in terms of pace. There is, in fact, a serious loss of suspense. Weaver's performance building up to the business with the hotel register is one of the most perfectly brilliant things of its kind I've ever been privileged to have in a picture. There would have to be some very big advantage to the playing of the whole sequence to justify throwing out the major part of such a scene as that. There is no such advantage. The building up about the party now makes little or no sense and Vargas's

growing apprehension (and ours) is unexploited. Here was a lovely developed atmosphere of suspense; and the suspense really worked, too. God knows it's called for at this point. To chop into it in the interests of plain speed is to let the pressure out of the situation, to hurt the story just where it hurts most: at the point of build-up.

Here was the original plan:

Menzies stands almost paralyzed with shock as Vargas moves out of the Hall of Records and we dissolve (from Menzies' stricken face) to the forlorn figure of the "night-man" in the motel. Vargas's car stops and he appears. Where is his wife? . . . Where, indeed? . . . Our fears fly ahead of him as he struggles to communicate with Weaver. The exchange is painful: in a spooky sort of way, even a little crazy. . . . Slowly Vargas himself begins to realize that this man he's talking to is crazy, or something very close to it. . . . Out of hesitation—out of odd, anxious blank moments—a hint of some nameless enormity grows like smoke in the dark room. . . . As the kids would put it, this is a real "gone" scene. . . . The "night-man" is "way, way out there." . . . Conscious as ever of the need for careful politeness in this foreign country, Vargas presses on with his questions. . . . Suddenly, out of the murk, the reference to some sort of "party" drops like a heavy stone. . . .

That's the way the scene was shot. As it is now, Vargas appears, asks for his wife, gets one fumbling reply and then, abruptly, without any feeling of chill, we're faced with that word "party." The cut outside comes very quickly—there's no time given us to let our questions about what's happened to Susan grow or take on strange, distorted shapes. . . . Now, before we know it, Weaver and Vargas are bustling off to the bedroom. . . . [*This was not restored in the release version, but* is *restored in the 108-minute version—J. R.*]

. . . I'd like to congratulate whoever edited the street scene in which Vargas drives into the traffic jam, fails to hear Susan, and continues across the international boundary. The cutting here is not only superior to what it was at the stage when I left it, but actually better than the effect I'd been hoping for. . . .

The extremely tight shot of Vargas speaking the line " . . . *murder* . . . " has now been trimmed to the point of being merely jerky and abrupt. I particularly regret the decision to cut away from this scene before the effect of going out of focus. I ask that this trim be reconsidered, bearing in mind that the out-of-focus device assists the violent transition to the interior of the jail, and at the same time, expresses the frenzy of Vargas's feelings at this moment, and his virtual disintegration. The frames have to be carefully picked for this, because the lens itself had to be removed at the end of the out-of-focus effect, and at that moment, of course, the screen goes white. My idea was to dissolve very quickly during the out-of-focus action into the darkness of the jail door, finishing the dissolve as the door opens. [*This was restored.*]

Mr. Heston reports that the cutting of the second half of his scene with Menzies (on the porch opposite Tanya's), resulted only from the fact that the sudden silence where the recording device is intended to "playback" was not understood. I hope that this is so. The exact sentence which was to have been played back escapes me, but a few moments' study of the preceding action will make this perfectly clear. The trick of the machine echoing their words at this point is a good one in itself; but what's genuinely valuable in this scene is just that part of it which is now trimmed. The whole sequence is really a build-up to Menzies' line, " . . . everything I know I learned from him . . . " (or something very near that) and then his look off-scene to the house where Quinlan is. Menzies' feeling for his boss and love for his friend is never shown so well elsewhere in the picture. This is Calleia's decisive moment in the performance of the character . . . and communicates much more than Menzies ever says in words. . . . [*This scene survives only in the 108-minute version; Menzies' last line is, "I am what I am because of him."—J. R.*]

. . . At the very end, I had a particular arrangement of short cuts building up to Quinlan's collapse into the water of the canal. This involved the closing of the recording device, the backing up of Quinlan, his dead body dropping into the water, and other moving shots arranged in a very fast crescendo. As I left it, this brief montage, although not exactly as I wanted it, was quite close to being right. I honestly believe it was—or would have been—one of the most striking things I've ever had anything to do with.

I close this memo with a very earnest plea that you consent to this brief visual pattern to which I gave so many long days of work. [*This was partially restored.*]

Ric Gentry

An Interview with Dede Allen

Dede Allen at work on *Mike's Murder* (1982)

Outside of the industry itself, very few motion picture editors enjoy any kind of recognition. Of these, Dede Allen is by far the best known. She credits much of this to her association with the great directors she's worked with, many of whom were lionized as auteurs when applications of the theory were just burgeoning in the United States in the 1960s and 1970s.

But Allen is modest and perhaps somewhat unfair to herself. While what she says of the attention she's received is true, nevertheless she is probably our greatest contemporary editor.

Even if she had cut nothing else but *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967), Allen's place in cinema history would be virtually assured, but her roster of credits also includes *Odds Against Tomorrow* (1959), *The Hustler* (1961), *America, America* (1963), *Rachel, Rachel* (1968), *Alice's Restaurant* (1969), *Little Big Man* (1970), *Slaughterhouse Five* (1972), *Serpico* (1973), *Dog Day Afternoon* (1975, Academy Award nomination), *Night Moves* (1975), *The Missouri Breaks* (1976), *Slap Shot* (1977), *Reds* (1981, Academy Award nomination), *Mike's Murder* (1984), *The Breakfast Club* (1985), *The Milagro Beanfield War* (1988), *Henry and June* (1990); and, most recently, *The Addams Family* (1991).

Allen's best collaborations have been with original, independent directors who were secure enough to allow her to fully contribute to their films, directors such as Robert Wise, Robert Rossen, Elia Kazan, Arthur Penn, George Roy Hill, Sidney Lumet, Warren Beatty, and Philip Kaufman. As many of these directors have noted, Allen's diligence, grasp of the medium, and pursuit of excellence inspired them to the most refined articulation of their visions. Penn has remarked on her distinctive sense of visual rhythm and has praised her sensitivity and empathy for character. Hill has noted her bold innovative use of pace and transitions, and Beatty has commented that her use of image and sound in counterpoint both embellish and enlarge the poetic context of the drama. Allen is nothing if not a director's editor.

Yet Allen did not become an editor or a success overnight. She started out as a messenger at Columbia Pictures in 1943 and didn't cut her first major feature film until 16 years later at the age of 34. Her very gradual progress can be much ascribed to the film industry's initial resistance to women in her field and to the fact that, in accordance with the times, she nearly jettisoned her career to become a mother and a housewife in the early 1950s. Eventually, however, Allen anticipated many of the tenets of the latter-day feminism, enjoying a family while flourishing professionally.

Now, at 67, Allen maintains that she is still learning. "That's what it's all about," she says. "If I stop learning, then I stop giving. If you lose that I think you lose everything." Usually credited with establishing the "New York School of Editing," Allen has served as mentor to a number of now prominent editors: Jerry Greenberg, Barry Malkin, Richard Marks, Steven Rotter, and Evan Lottman; she also worked with Jim Miller on *The Addams Family*. Yet that could be her last film for some time. Allen recently accepted an executive position at Warner Brothers as consultant for post-production for at least two years. "I had the feeling that I was closing my last cutting room with this picture," she says of *The Addams Family*. "I was wondering who I should give my new N-Viso splicers to. But we'll just have to see."

Interview

RIC GENTRY: *Off the top of your head, can you mention what you've learned from certain directors?*

DEDE ALLEN: I learned a lot about story from Robert Rossen. I learned a lot about performance from Arthur Penn, with whom I did six pictures. I learned a lot about everything—including psychology—from Elia Kazan. From Paul Newman I learned a great deal about acting. From Warren Beatty you learn a lot about everything, including how to be smarter in life.

Warren's one of the best producers I've ever had. He was our producer on *Bonnie and Clyde*. He was 30 years old then. He's a very, very brilliant guy. You learn, and he learns from you because he lets you teach. He works with people very well, much like Kazan does.

Let's talk about Reds, *on which you were also executive producer.*

Reds took ten years of my life—in two and a half years. It was two and a half years with no days off. But I wouldn't have missed it for anything.

In the beginning, Warren didn't have an office. My living room in New York was our office. Finally my husband kicked us out. We had to establish an office and we got one on 57th Street. Over the years Warren had gotten in touch with people we would interview and who would become "The Witnesses" [an intermittent documentary part of the film], and the list kept growing. We finally organized a shooting schedule but there wasn't a studio affiliated with the picture yet. Warren paid for it himself. We went around the country and did all the interviews in a three-week period. We shot around 250,000 feet of film. The Henry Miller interview was 11 reels, because Henry Miller loved to talk and Warren loved that interview.

Given all the takes Warren Beatty tends to shoot, Reds *must have been challenging to edit.*

There was a tremendous amount of footage. Officially, what was it Warren said? "We shot 700,000 feet! Not a foot more!" But the negative cutter tells me that we actually shot more than *Apocalypse Now*, and *Apocalypse* held the record until then.

We were editing in England. We had to develop very careful notes because so much of it was improvised. We had take after take after take without slates in between. Basically they took off on a scene and did it a hundred different ways, improvising. I had to get a lot of the footage transcribed because no two takes were alike. They didn't have the same dialogue. For the whole Eugene O'Neill area of the film, there were innumerable takes. Jack Nicholson, who was just wonderful in that film, would say different things in each one.

But it was a wonderful movie. *Reds* and *Bonnie and Clyde* are two of the few pictures that didn't have many things that didn't work. It's exciting to work on a whole picture where you could look at it over and over again and it plays.

What makes Warren Beatty a good producer?

A persistence such as you've never seen. Also a persistence for detail. Sometimes it takes him a

long time before he gets going but when he does he's a very single-minded guy. A good producer is very important. I've seen a good director working under a bad producer and not do his best work. On *Bonnie and Clyde,* Warren put the right person with the right picture and fought all the right fights to see that picture through.

[Addams Family *cinematographer*] *Owen Roizman was mentioning to me how meticulous you were.*

Editors are detail people. You shouldn't be an editor if you don't like details, countless details—and you have to be very flexible. You have to use your knowledge very flexibly.

With Paul Newman on his first film, *Rachel, Rachel,* the first thing he said was, "Rachel has to be in every shot." Now Paul is a very gracious man, very intelligent but very modest, and he was very concerned about protecting his actors. But I said, "Paul, she can't be in every shot. You have to have cutaways." He said, "I don't want cutaways. I want this to center on her. It's all about her experience." Later we were discussing and diagramming how you cover scenes. After a while he said, about one of the shots, "This is great for the long complicated move, but here's a part of this other take that I like better." And I said, "O.K., this is what I meant before. If I don't have anything to cut away to, how am I going to get between this take and that take?"

From the editor's side, too, you have to allow people to do things their way. You can't become rigid and presume there's a right and a wrong way and you always know what that is. You can't learn anything if you approach it like that.

And no two editors would cut a film in the same way?

How characters behave, I believe, is interpreted differently by everyone who is there to interpret them. I think the editor makes a difference on every picture. And I've never worked on a picture that was shot in the camera. I get the hard ones [laughs].

But the question is, always: Are you going to do the characters justice? Are you going to do the story justice? Are you going to make it the best it can be in terms of what it's trying to say? That's the challenge of every film.

What about the challenges of creating characters and telling a story with so many visual effects as The Addams Family?

Well, nothing I've done before would even come close to the number of effects we had on this film. My very first picture—*Terror from the Year 5000*—had a character who was a monster woman, but there were no visual or special effects. That was a real B movie, one of those early American-International Productions.

But here, when we started cutting our negative, we had 25 to 30 shots that weren't yet finished. We just had "temps" in, partial images, images that were just first takes with elements sometimes missing.

The character of Thing, for instance, he moves all around, he's very active, just this hand. He'll tug on Gomez' pants leg to get his attention. Thing is played by a magician, Chris Hart. But before it's all properly matted, you work with an image of a man and his arm and sometimes the crew moving him from one place to another on a dolly, and you have to just ignore all that in order to keep cutting.

Sequences, for example, where Thing goes on one of his adventures, out on the highway or on a street corner—you'll have your foreground element and then you have to separately choose what the background element will be. Everyone has to agree on what those elements are before you start matting them together because that's very expensive and very time-consuming. It's all storyboarded ahead of time, but you still have to select the elements that make it work.

It's also very tough to shoot because you have to do it over and over and over again to get it right. You just choose one to make the matte but you have to wade through so much footage to do that.

Have you always cut concurrently to a film as it's shot?

Usually. But I've started editing at different times with different directors. On *America, America,* I didn't start cutting until Kazan came back from Greece. I came on to *Slapshot* late because I was finishing another picture and so I was able to start at the beginning of the story. I like to do that because as the story evolves, characters evolve. But you can't always do that. On *The Addams Family* I worked totally out of [story] continuity. I worked in the continuity that we shot

in. Directors like to work as much in sequence as they can, but that's not the way budgets work.

On *Slaughterhouse Five,* I didn't start until they finished the Dresden scenes, which were actually shot in Prague, and came back to work in the U.S., which was about two months after the shooting began. When I started to cut that it was all in story continuity, which is the way I like to work best, particularly when you're working on something as fragile as the point of view in *Slaughterhouse Five* was.

Is there any particular way that you like to organize yourself before you start to cut?

I memorize everything. I work until I memorize every frame of it. Then I feel totally free. I never feel terrified of the scene again because it will always be there in my head. I'm getting older but my memory still works very well.

But I work on the memorization right from the start. For instance, I don't ever mind seeing dailies. I don't care how often I see them. I'll run them as often as anyone wants to and I never get bored looking at them. I'm always seeing or finding something else in them. I'll see dailies on the screen for the arch proscenium effect and then again on the Kem.

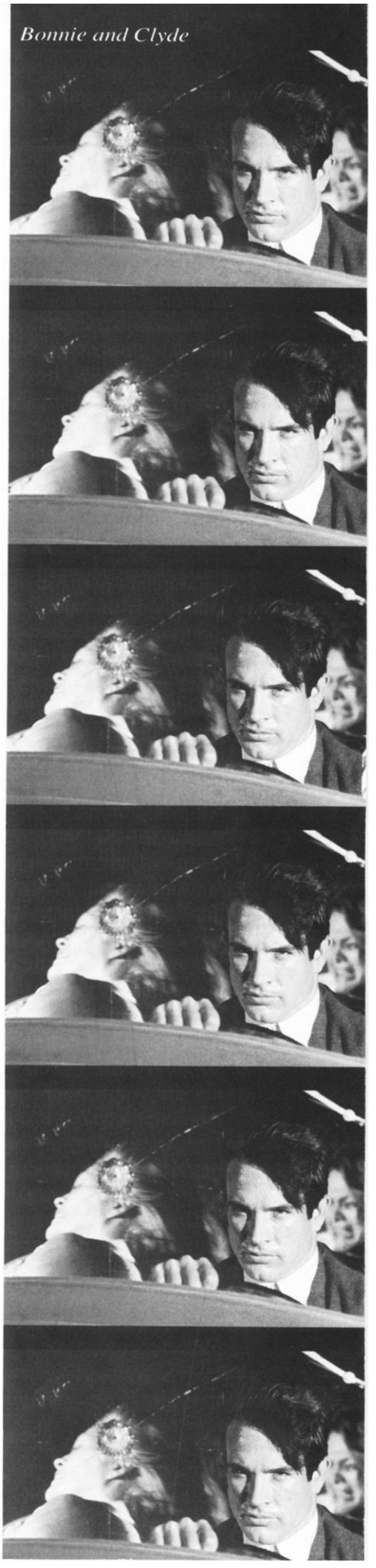
An editor has to remember every frame. It's like a chess game. You have to be able to think ahead and think back. You have to know where the scene is going to go and how that character is going to evolve. About the most dangerous thing I can do is work in a hurry and cut the scene glibly, before I really know the material.

So you usually have a very clear idea of what takes or portions of takes you're going to use to assemble the scene?

Pretty much so. I never sit and rough it out. I know that a lot of people do that with a scene. I think the timing and the tempo of my cuts are different than the way someone else might do it just for that reason. I don't do an Eisenstein kind of board, with all the cuts laid out, which is what I call "talking a good cut," you know, intellectualizing. I feel my way through the characters. You just viscerally, emotionally feel the way the characters feel. You become so involved in a scene that you become moved or stimulated or amused. Actors say they have to become the part. Well, the editor has to become part of the part. You live in the world of that story.

That's one reason I ask directors a lot of questions. I want to know what they have in mind. Sometimes I get a little rambunctious in trying to find out. Sometimes I get pretty forward in getting them to think about something they may not have thought through and it's not always something that they want to do. That can make things a little uncomfortable, though most directors I've worked with don't feel threatened. They're usually very confident about themselves and in what they're doing and welcome suggestions. But I spend a lot of time with directors trying to get a total feeling about how they feel about the characters and the story.

My first complete cuts usually play very smoothly but sometimes very dully because they're too long. One thing I've learned is not to leave anything out at that point. Even if a scene doesn't work, a director always wants to see what it was. You may be a step or many steps ahead of the director before he sees the first cut but that's because you've been living with it in the editing room for much longer. But it doesn't make any


Bonnie and Clyde

difference. You have to go through that period where there's too much footage. A first cut can be a nightmare of overabundance, with all of it playing and very tight within itself. It'll be a very carefully constructed first cut. But it'll just be too long and cumbersome and sort of unwieldy.

Then I'm not afraid to cut into it, to make it move faster. Co-editors sometimes get very upset with the way I work. I'm not afraid of rough edges, for example. If I'm in charge of a picture and I step in and change a scene because it's to the point where it has to begin to move and I'm cutting "deeper," they might say, "Oh, you're going to ruin the cut." But I'll say, "No, it energizes it."

But you have to know what you're looking for in a scene. You don't just chop. I'm a great believer that you have to know the rules to break the rules.

What kind of editing equipment do you prefer?

I use two Moviolas to cut. I make changes on flatbeds and I screen on flatbeds but I always cut on two Moviolas, side by side. Basically I work on the Moviola to my left and [use] the one on my right to compare takes and line readings.

When people are working on an eight-plate Kem, they're in effect working with two Moviolas, but they don't get their hands on the bits and pieces of film. With the Moviola you're very close to it. I find that when you stop on a Kem it doesn't stop right on the frame. You can't sneak it forward and back. It stops and then it chatters on for a frame or two, which is very imprecise for me.

The rhythm with which you cut on a Moviola is just much easier, I think. You're more likely to get tired on a Moviola than on a Kem, but you deal with it. After years of standing over a Moviola I had to retrain myself to cut sitting down. It made a difference for me physically.

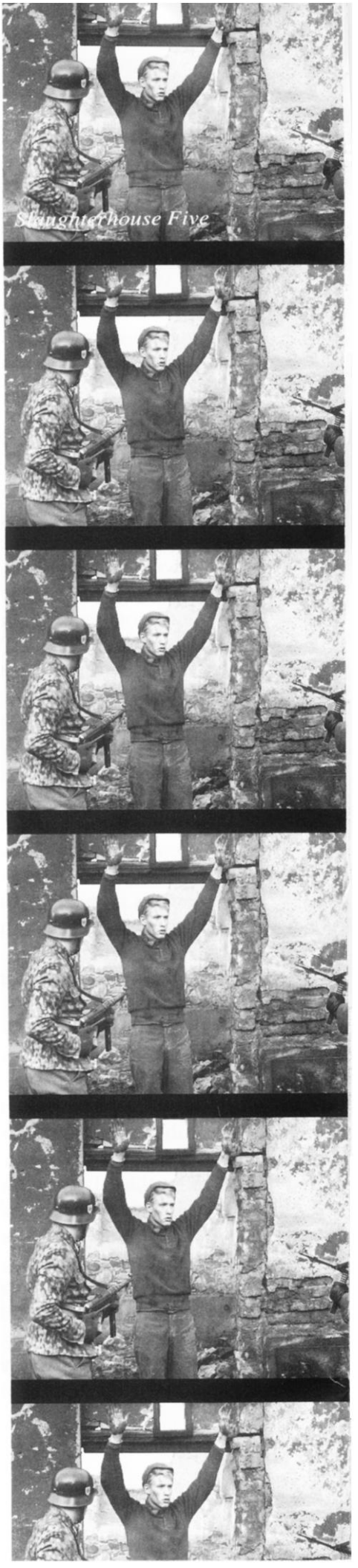
But all of that started with the two Moviolas on *America, America,* when Kazan went away and left me alone drowning in footage. There wasn't anything in the budget for an assistant to work overtime and I had to find a way to get through it all, so I used a second Moviola with a silent head that someone had given me. I paid for the second Moviola myself on several films because I couldn't get the budget for two. I just began renting another one out of my own pocket. You do what you have to do to make it work.

In terms of memorizing the dailies and deciding what you're going to use for a given scene, how do you manage that with an actor like Dustin Hoffman who, as I understand it, might give you 10, 12 or 14 takes per scene?

What—10, 12, or 14? More like that many per angle! And with Warren, more like 40 or 50 per angle.

Yes, it's hard to memorize all that because it is an overwhelming amount of footage, but if you just organize yourself mentally and know that you're going to memorize it you can.

The thing that's overwhelming usually, particularly these days, is everything having to go faster, faster, get it out faster. The studios these days are run by people who don't know the process like they used to. They think you just put on more bodies and it all comes out. When I was working in what I call "the good old days," you made a film in a kind of orderly process without what I call a "gang bang," which



is what happens when they put ten editors on a film and which is evidently happening more and more. It's more of a factory process, but the reality of the industry is that pictures are so expensive and interest rates are so high that there's a real urgency to get it out faster.

I feel very fortunate to have worked at a time and in a way and with the kind of people I did that very few have the opportunity to experience today. I'm sure that Marty Scorsese still works that way with Thelma Schoonmaker, but it's much harder when you get on these huge budget pictures where so much rides on it.

There's also all these previews where the audience decides what to cut. A lot of the movies being made then would never have passed the marketing screenings they have now. You get an audience from a mall, kids, 15 to 20 or 18 to 25, and they're given a questionnaire. It's very interesting how they load the questions. And then the film is adjusted according to the responses to the questionnaires. They tell you at Paramount: "We don't have final cut. The audience has final cut."

It's all part of marketing, making movies with census takers. *Dog Day Afternoon* or *Bonnie and Clyde* or any of the other films I consider the most interesting I've worked on—they never would have made it in one of these screenings with a test audience. They never would have opened well. It's very frightening.

So films are taken from the directors and the artists, in a sense?

Well, there's a lot of push toward that. Some studios like extreme control. You know what Disney does.

Do you find that the heads of studios are not really that "film-literate" anymore?

Let's put it this way: Studios are run much more by bottom-line people now, money people. Very often you'll meet someone in charge of your picture who hasn't the faintest idea of how pictures are really made. And depending on the person and what their priorities are, some of them don't give a damn, either. They don't take the time. They just want to push the thing through. Sometimes it's agents who become heads of studios who aren't really film-makers and don't really know what that's about and don't look at films as a film-maker does. On the other hand, many agents are very creative people who've dealt with story and artists for a long time and have picked up all the lingo and know what they're doing. If they've been an agent it doesn't mean they're going to be any worse than anyone else.

But after all, my first studio was Columbia and the head of Columbia was Harry Cohn. I worked there four years. It was a very different era then.

Let's talk about that. How did you get started?

I started when I was 18 in 1943 at Columbia Pictures. I was in Scripps College out here [in Claremont] when I got a summer job as a messenger between my sophomore and junior years. They were taking in what they called "girls" for the first time. It was during the Second World War and there was a shortage of available male personnel. I never went back to college after that.

So you're from California originally?

No, I was born in Ohio but I never lived there much. I lived in Switzerland for much of my childhood because my sister had TB and my mother brought her to the Magic Mountain and I went along for the ride. I was three when we went over and my first language became French. I came out here when I was about 12, first to San Francisco and San Rafael and then Pasadena. I went back to Ohio for the last few years of high school.

I was interested in films ever since I was a kid. My mother was a great movie buff and there was nothing we didn't go see. We sometimes went to the movies four times a week. I saw a lot of theater too because my mother had been an actress and my grandfather was very interested in the theater. He was a surgeon in Cincinnati but his whole life really revolved around the theater. When I came out here my grandfather wrote a letter for me to Elliot Nugent, Sr., who was doing his first picture with Danny Kaye about that time, called *Up in Arms*. Elliot Nugent saw me and said, "Young lady, if you want to become a director, you should get into the cutting room." I never became a director but I became an editor.

But it took a long, long time. It took a long time to become a messenger, which I was for ten months. Then I got into the sound effects department at Columbia, where I was for three years, and became an assistant in sound. At the end of the war

I had gained seniority and was able to stay. I became a sound effects editor but could never get into picture editing at Columbia. Few women of my generation got into picture editing in Hollywood until they were somewhere in mid-life.

How did you begin working in New York?

I got married and my husband and I decided to move in 1950. Steve [Fleischman] had started as a screenwriter but didn't like the life in Hollywood so we went to New York. I was script clerk for a while and helped organize a script clerk's union and then got a job cutting picture at Film Graphics for commercials and industrials. I was having my children and Steve was a free-lance writer and we thought one of us should have a staff position. I went to work at Film Graphics for the next four years.

Did you feel that you were perhaps taking a professional step backwards, leaving Columbia for a different life on the other side of the country?

I wasn't looking at it quite like that. I thought I would have children and just retire and never work again. But it didn't happen that way. About eight weeks after my son was born, Film Graphics called me and said, "Are you ready to come back to work?"

Wasn't it also very unusual for a woman to be a professional at the time.

Yeah, it was. There were women who had professions but everyone didn't work and have children the way they do now.

You were about 30 years ahead of your time.

That's what they say. But there were people in my mother's generation who did it, too. During the Depression there were women who worked because they had to. I came out of the generation right after that and the feeling then was that a woman shouldn't take a job because it took away from a man who had a family to support. You had to take care of yourself and be independent because of the experience during the Depression, but you must never take a job away from a man.

Was it particularly difficult for a woman working in the film industry?

You had to put up with a lot of bullshit. You have to learn more than anyone should have to know to be taken seriously, especially with the labs, which is why you get as good as you are at what you do. If you learn it and become good then they respect you. But you just have to work a lot harder. I got very tired of it after a while. Each time you started with a new lab you had to go through the same battle all over again. But once you had their respect, you had it eternally.

But I like labs. I like the people who work in labs. Technical people are very often kind of shoved aside as noncreative, but the truth is that they're all part of the creative process.

As an editor, to what extent were you involved with the lab?

From the very beginning I was involved with the film until the follow-through. Everything involving the prints and the timing and all of that.

Doesn't the cinematographer usually do that?

I was a New York editor and the cameraman was seldom available at the end of a film. Barry Sonnenfeld, who is also a cameraman, couldn't believe that in all the years that I've done pictures,

I had only three where the cameraman came in on the timing.

I understand that there were some timing difficulties with The Addams Family.

Where we had a problem was with the Eastman Kodak 5384 print stock. It was the same number we were familiar with but it didn't perform the same and Kodak claimed that it did. At first we thought it was a problem at Technicolor [which was producing the release prints] and so we went back to Deluxe where the dailies were processed and ran a roll of the 84 at the same timing lights which were still in their computer from the original dailies, and the same thing happened. The color was flat and had a lot less snap. The blacks weren't rich.

So then we called a representative at Kodak and showed him the original next to the print stock. He said, "Oh, it doesn't look different to me." And Barry said, "Well, if it doesn't look different to you, there's something very wrong. But let's assume that you're just *saying* that it doesn't look any different. Then you've either changed the stock or your controls are off, and if your controls are off you're really in trouble." But Kodak denied it. They denied everything.

Only with a lot of trial and error and diligent assistance from Technicolor did we get what we wanted. We did it by changing the "aims" [the arc of the interpositive to produce greater piquancy in the print]. But the whole reason this happened is that there's now a new interpositive-internegative system.

See, after the old Technicolor process we had something called C.R.I.s [color reversal internegatives] that were really awful. They degenerated. You remember the big fight Scorsese and all these people had to save films that were fading? That was the C.R.I. process. It faded and it looked like hell and everyone was pushing Kodak to develop something that was at least salvageable. But when you go to an internegative and a duplicate print it suddenly goes very contrasty and saturated. That's where we are today and every director and cameraman is screaming that it looks terrible.

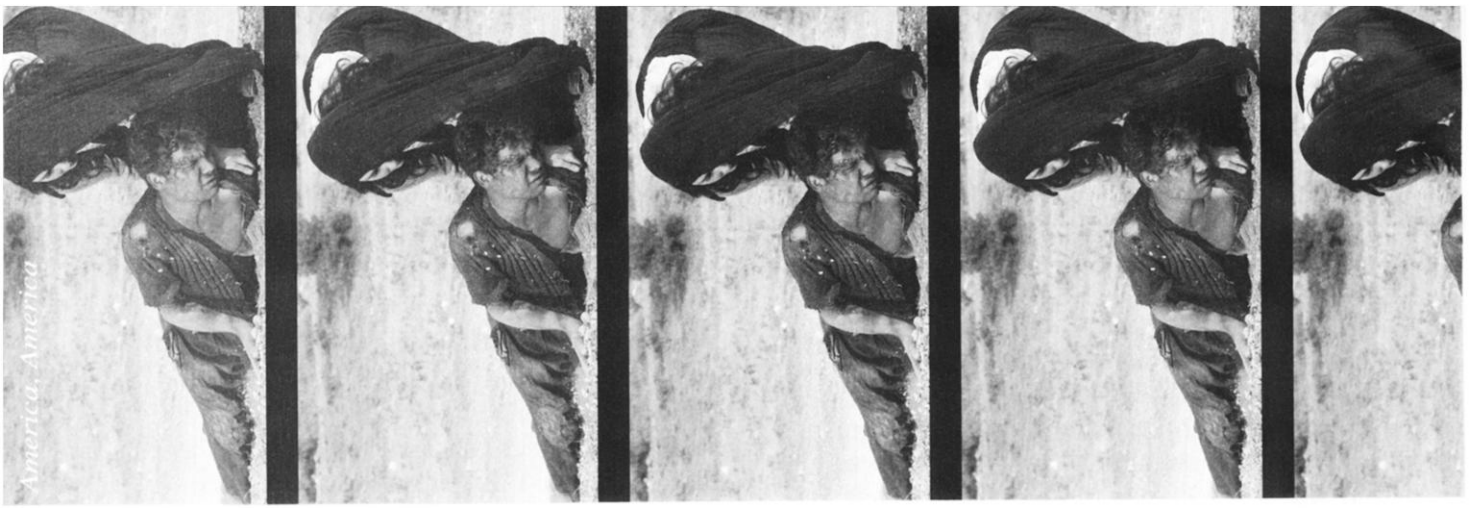
Our theory is that instead of trying to solve the problem in the internegative-interpositive stage so that you can match the original on the dupe, Kodak was simply making a less contrasty print stock. It's definitely less contrasty, but that's not the solution and they're not telling you what they've done.

Getting back to your own story—how did you get to cut your first feature film?

After Film Graphics I went to work as an editor with Carl Lerner, who was in charge of a couple of TV series. I'd first met Carl in Hollywood. He was an excellent editor who went on to establish quite a reputation. Through him I got to cut *Terror from the Year 5000,* one of those AIP horror films, as I was saying before, with a wonderful actress named Salome Jens, who hopes no one ever remembers it. Then when Carl was doing *Middle of the Night,* he recommended me to Bob Wise for *Odds Against Tomorrow,* which was my first real feature. I was 34 by then. I'd been in the business for about 16 years.

What was it like going to work with Robert Wise?

I was terrified. I thought, Shit, I won't last a minute. But it turned out that he was just the greatest thing that ever happened to me because he



imbued me with such confidence. He's a very gentle but firm, knowledgeable professional with great grace.

There was a Saturday when I was to show him my first scene. This was so far back that we were still using foot splicers, great big machines where you hot-splice the footage to seal the splices together. If you made a change you lost a frame and you had to put in black slugs instead to keep synchronization. When I showed him what I'd cut, the scene was filled with black slugs because I'd changed my mind so many times. The first thing he said was, "Gee, you played with that a lot. I like that. Don't ever let that frighten you." That was a tremendous gift of support, especially if you're editing for a guy like Bob Wise and terrified you're going to fall on your face.

There were maybe ten people up for that job with Bob and many with a lot more experience than I had, but he went with me because of my training and my background in sound.

That's interesting, because you've always used sound very imaginatively in your work.

Well, sound is as important to me as picture. I think the whole question of rhythm in a scene is often related to sound. It's probably an advantage that editors with experience in sound effects have.

I often cut silent when I'm in a rush. That was more by happenstance the first couple of times. I was in a terrible rush to get a scene done and the only way I could do it was to just drop the sound and not work with the synchronizer and then put the track on it later. I found that my timing was such that I could do that and almost not have to change a frame of it and I think that was due to my background in sound. In other words, after I had memorized the dailies I could still hear the sounds in my head. It never goes away.

But I also like to add sound to the images. It's exciting and it invigorates the scene. Without it, one of your dimensions is missing. You have no sense for what it really is. It's very hard for anyone, even a good director, to envision the sound if it's not there. You have to have something and what you choose enriches the scene incredibly.

Though silence is also sound. In other words, you use silence in the same way, as an effect or for punctuation. Silence will do something emotionally that's very interesting to a scene.

In *Little Big Man,* the death of Sunshine, Jack Crabb's wife, during the the massacre of the Washita in the snow: it suddenly goes silent there and that's the way I always had it. The scene got so intense that at a certain point I just dropped sound. I showed it to Arthur [Penn] and we never tried it another way.

There were also some interesting uses of sound in Odds Against Tomorrow.

One of the things I did was bounce sound forward and backward to help propel scenes.

I also added temp music to a scene. It was shot up in Hudson, N.Y., with all these beautiful shots of churches. The idea was to develop the town where they're going to pull this bank robbery. I went out and got some music, a record—I didn't want to present the scene without sound and I like to have something to cut to rhythmically. Bob was very delighted with that, too. He liked the initiative. I tend to cut slightly off the rhythm of the music, I don't know why—I don't do it consciously. It seems to be the way it works. But it's amazing the way images and sound kind of find each other.

Working with Bob was a very exciting experience. He was fascinated that as a woman I saw things differently, everything from the way you

approach material to the way you would play a romantic encounter. But the whole thing was exciting. He's not the kind of man who sits around and spouts Talmudic scholar talk. He's just a very practical film-maker. He's very visual. He plans his stuff very well. You'd have to be an idiot not to learn a mountain from him. You'd kill yourself for a man like that.

Given your experience with Wise, did you find that there were also advantages to being a woman in the business?

Yeah, there were advantages. You could be less inhibited than a man. You can be more emotional. You can cry if you get mad. In other words, you don't have to conform to the same standards.

Your next film was The Hustler. . . .

Well, there was a year between the two. I went back to cutting industrials. I really didn't think I'd ever get another feature. There weren't that many made in New York. I had to give one up because it was summer and my kids needed me and I felt like I'd never get another opportunity. Finally I got *The Hustler* through Wise. He recommended me to Robert Rossen. Rossen was the kind of guy who spoke like this [out of the side of her mouth], "You better be good, kid."

He was a terrific writer and he loved to experiment with film. We switched sequences around all the time. He was constantly trying to improve the structure. We'd make a change and then he'd run the whole picture all over again just to see how the change would play. And it's very interesting what kinds of things come out of a story, particularly in terms of characters, when you start rearranging things. Even a very little thing usually affects everything else. If you switch a scene around, it can have reverberations on story, on rhythm, on emotion, on understanding. This is true of any cut. Who is it that makes the first move in a particular romantic situation? This can change everything in how you view the characters.

We ended up cutting a scene from *The Hustler* that Paul Newman always claimed cost him an Academy Award. It was one of the scenes in the pool hall and Newman gives an impassioned speech, an absolutely brilliant performance. The problem was that it was very similar to another speech that couldn't be cut because that scene was connected to plot on both sides. We waited as long as we could before we threw out the other scene. It was very painful—but it didn't move the story.

But in the way that Rossen would switch sequences, he was in a sense writing the picture after he'd shot it. But you always do that in some way. Writing goes right on until the end, down to what you put in the loop lines.

With The Hustler *you introduced transitions that weren't in the script.*

I didn't use the dissolves that were indicated in the script. I just used cuts instead. It gave it a different style. I think it surprised Rossen but he left it. Once he saw something that worked he never fiddled around. He used to say, "It works. It plays. Leave it. Don't improve it into a disaster."

Let's talk about Bonnie and Clyde. *That was revolutionary in a number of ways and the editing was extremely different for the time.*

We used a kind of shorthand in *Bonnie and Clyde* because of the nature of the story and the kind of coverage and performances it had. We were able to go in with angles and close-ups and only pull back when we wanted to show what Arthur called "the tapestry." Arthur really wanted to give it all this energy. He kept saying, "Look at the film again. Make it go faster." I did that two or three times and as I did it got more interesting. I

broke many of my hard and fast rules about story, character, and how a scene plays.

I think a lot of people at the time thought it wasn't good editing. The first time Jack Warner saw a cut, he couldn't believe that we were going to fade out at the end of a scene and then cut in with the next, or vice versa. The way that started was when I tried a fade on one side and the other side wasn't ready yet. We looked at it and Arthur liked it and we began using it. It moved faster. It whooshed you in to the next scene, which Arthur thought was so important. A full fade has that black in the middle which brings things to a stop.

Later *Bonnie and Clyde* acquired this mystique which was pretty widely imitated. Even the way commercials are cut, with all that acceleration, was something *Bonnie and Clyde* helped to start. But it was all Arthur. It was his rhythm.

Do you have any advice for a young editor in learning his or her craft?

I used to tell people who started out, "Go to the theater. Work in the theater. Start learning what makes a scene play. Start learning about performance." I think theater training for an editor is very important.

I had it out here while I was still at Columbia. I spent every night and weekend working at the Actors Lab. I learned about theater then, about lighting, sound, props, performance. I also took acting and directing classes and stage managed.

The Actors Lab was made up mostly of the old Group Theatre in New York who came out here. You know who was in it? People like Roman Bohnen, J. Edward Bromberg, Morris Carnovsky. You probably don't even know who they were. They were all in movies in those days. You'd know their faces if you saw them. Lee J. Cobb. They were all there. Some of them became infamous. Some of them turned in people. It was a very weird period.

You were something of a leftist yourself early on, but were you ever summoned to testify before HUAC or during the McCarthy purges?

No. A couple of times, I'm told, I was in the transcripts, but I was never called to testify or blacklisted or driven out of a job. I was involved with the Hollywood Strike but not in a political sense. I worked with people who handled strong points of view, that's true. I also worked with people who ratted. Robert Rossen named 57 people, among them a lot of people I knew. But I never got involved with him politically. Kazan named a lot of people. I never knew him politically. I just knew him dramatically.

How would you define your politics now?

Oh, I'm a liberal-liberal. I've always been left of center. My mother got very upset because she was always a liberal. She came from a totally Republican family and she was a Democrat and she lived in Europe a lot. She lived in Paris and anything left of her was radical and I got left of her! [laughs] I guess had my father lived I might have become a nice reactionary Republican. But I was kind of a black sheep.

Well, do you think that your approach to your work might have some relationship to your sense of politics?

I guess it does. Politics activate your emotions in a different way. I feel strongly, one way or the other. But I think that people feeling just as strongly the other way might be just as passionate in their work. I was always a bleeding heart. I was a good worker—look, I was a shop steward when I was at Columbia, when we went from a guild to a union. It wasn't a big deal, really. All you did was make sure everyone was paid and treated right. We had meetings once in a while, before the union meetings. I got involved in things like that.

I don't think I would have done it any differently even though I know a lot of it doesn't work very well, nor would I ever deny anything like that. I think that's one of the richest parts of my past.

What will it be like for you with your new position at Warner Brothers?

I'm looking forward to it as a new experience and one where I hope I can make a contribution. But who knows? [laughs] I still don't know what I'm supposed to do! I'll be a "suit." Everyone's laughing about it because I'm known to be intensely loyal to directors and suddenly I'm going to be part of the studio. I don't know what's going to happen.

▪ Ric Gentry is an L.A.-based free-lance writer and film-maker.

Review

My Own Private Idaho

Writer/Director: Gus Van Sant. Producer: Laurie Parker. Executive Producers: Van Sant, Allan Mindel. Cinematography: Eric Alan Edwards, John Campbell. Editor: Curtiss Clayton. New Line Cinema.

A body of work often written against the grain of humanistically inclined narrative about the joys and sorrows of "ordinary people" documents life on the road in the depths, or otherwise at the margins of society. A contemporary literature of the damned specifically addresses the experience of gay males at the edge. One recalls the tarnished street angels of Jean Genet (*The Thief's Journal*) and John Rechy (*City of Night*); the transvestite flaming creatures of Hubert Selby (*Last Exit to Brooklyn*); the bizarre futurist sadomasochists of William Burroughs (*Naked Lunch*).

Very different writers in this subgenre share the same fierce lucidity about their tawdry milieus, as well as an ironic compassion for the lost souls inhabiting them, notably regarding their anguished, hopeless loves. Burroughs explains the title of his seminal novel: Naked lunch is when everyone gets to see exactly what's at the end of the fork, no matter how distasteful or disturbing the view. The gutter poets' objective take on their protagonists' self-destructiveness often articulates with an ideological position that the flagrantly "bent" life-style is inherently dangerous to the "straight" status quo. Authors like Genet regularly employ the decadent mode to critique bourgeois oppressiveness and hypocrisy.

Until very recently, mainstream cinema has found little place for the marginal, let alone the conforming gay. With loosened censorship in the past few decades, art films have occasionally portrayed the seedier side of gay culture and the defiance of the quotidian supposedly embodied therein (*Taxi zum Klo* and *Prick up Your Ears* and, notably, Fassbinder of *Fox and His Friends* and *Querelle*).

In *My Own Private Idaho*, director/writer Gus Van Sant draws liberally on the above literary and filmic sources to present his third, most subversive vision of life at the end of the fork (his previous two features are *Mala Noche*, a rarely shown mood piece about a gay Anglo liquor-store clerk's unhappy fixation upon an adolescent Mexican immigrant, and the successful *Drugstore Cowboy*, about the awakening of a grown-up hippy addict into ironic sobriety).

Idaho's two Pacific Northwest hustlers, Scott Favor (Keanu Reeves) and Mike Waters (River Phoenix), are close cousins to the director's previous marginal heroes. Scott is favored indeed, the son of Portland's mayor. His presence on the mean streets is provisional, a function of bristling Oedipal revolt ("My father doesn't know I'm a threat!"). Scott prides himself on his "professional" attitude towards his degraded employment; he's glib, natty, deviously functional.

Mike, on the other hand, is so passive, so fluid in his defencelessness that he sometimes seems to dissolve into his surroundings. He's a festival of oral-stage pathology, ego-devastated by a childhood whose vastly traumatic dimensions Van Sant keeps sketchy. Mike never knew his father. His mother, loved with terrible, consuming neediness, abandoned him and his older brother (who might be his *real* father) early on, after blowing out her lover's brains in a drive-in during a John Wayne movie. If all this isn't hurtful enough, Mike's also a florid, untreated narcoleptic.

The script alternately embeds the protagonists in each other's story. But *My Own Private Idaho* is essentially informed by Mike's soporific/stoner sensibility. His neurological disorder enables an eerie, yet exhilarating sense of dislocation and narrative slipperiness. It's often unclear whether we're inside or outside Mike's skull, in real time or dream space. Whenever Mike falls out, Van Sant's camera winks out of existence, too. Events unfold in jump cut. We recurrently awaken with Mike as if the world were newly invented, under clouded circumstance in obscure locales.

The film's opening is paradigmatic. Mike stands at the edge of a road pointing arrowstraight into a magnificent infinity of Idaho hills (the shot is reminiscent of a similar opening in *Thelma & Louise*, another against-the-grain reading of the traditional buddy/road movie). He walks slowly

away from his duffel bag, measuring out the seconds before it tips over. "I've been stuck here before. . . . " he exclaims. "This is . . . like someone's face . . . like a fucked-up face." He curls his fingers before his eye, the camera obligingly irises in to show how the road, hills, two trees *do* weirdly combine into the unsettling semblance of a face. Suddenly Mike swoons, topples like a stone (or his bag) into the road's dead center.

In feverish time lapse, clouds scud across a turbulent sky. Before an ancient clapboard house, his mother (we don't yet know it's she) cradles his head in her lap. "Don't worry, everything is going to be all right," she croons. Cut to a tilted shot of salmon leaping out of a glistening river, their trajectory mysteriously soothing. Then the same house crashes down in slow motion from some Oz-like height. Cut to Mike, still supine. At first it seems he's on the road, but he turns out to be lying on a table in a Seattle flophouse, trembling with the orgasm brought on by an unseen "client."

The sequence is a stunning evocation of Bertram Lewin's dream screen. The "fucked-up" roadface prefigures the maternal breast engraved upon Mike's shattered psyche as an ambivalent source of raw reflection and endless replenishment. In a trance, he falls literally into his mother's arms—the salmon, leaping toward home, another fertile image of her recuperation—before his oneiric idyll crashes around him, and he awakens into the sordid bliss of the climax he's just sold.

Mike now wanders the streets in undesignated time, until an older woman picks him up and brings him home to meet Scott and another boy toy. Her undressing him precipitates another flashback to his mother, this time in jerky home-movie footage bled of color, like the memory of a memory. Mike passes out spectacularly. Scott drags him onto the lawn, takes him under his wing. Mike becomes inarticulately smitten.

Scott asserts that his deviancy is a mask, donned to accentuate the credibility of an eventual return to his father's house: "It will impress them more, when such a fuckup like me turns good!" Spoken in an echo of the Ted Logan character's Valleyspeak (*Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure*), the line is a gloss on the speech in *Henry IV, Part I*, in which Prince Hal justifies his desertion of the court to revel with Falstaff's rascal band: "[H]erein will I imitate the sun/who doth permit the base contagious clouds/ to smother up his beauty from the world/that when he please again to be himself/being wanted, he may be more wond'red at."

The action switches to Portland and the film's most startling narrative/stylistic shift. Van Sant now develops his extravagant analogy to the *Henry IV–V* cycle at length, lifting and compressing several famous scenes. The bard's language is warped into contemporary American low and high vernacular. Angry, ailing Mayor Favor plays King Henry to Scott's rebellious Hal. The Boar's Head tavern roisterers are transformed into the hustler tribe dwelling in an abandoned Portland hotel. And Falstaff is Bob Pigeon, self-proclaimed King of the Streets, exuberant drunk and coke addict, Scott's lowlife mentor and onetime lover.

The director confers complex resonances upon the Oedipal dynamics latent in *Henry IV/V*'s depiction of a wayward son's struggle with a powerful father (and a no-less-potent surrogate), by casting William Richert as his outrageous Falstaff/Bob. Richert is the director of the underground classic *Winter Kills*, based on novelist Richard Condon's wild but uncannily pointed spin on the Kennedy assassination.

In *Winter Kills*, the son who ambivalently distanced himself from his tycoon father's domination discovers the vile patriarch has connived his other, presidential son's execution when the latter became a liberal threat. More wheels within wheels: the Portland sequences also artfully reprise corresponding sections of *Chimes at Midnight*, Orson Welles' neglected masterpiece which moved Falstaff to center stage and placed Hal at the periphery. The openly gay Van Sant, with his evident affection for society's castoffs and scapegoats, thus subtly lauds Welles, perennial exile from Hollywood, as another of his personal "outlaw" mentors.

With little impetus except a fortuitously stolen motorcycle, Scott and Mike embark on a picaresque search for Mike's vanished mother in glorious heartland country. Along the way, Mike blurts out his infatuation, Scott responds elusively (the poignant scene, shot in desert darkness, may well be another one of Mike's stupefied reveries). The mother is eventually traced to a farmhouse outside of Rome. But she's long gone, and a shy

young woman captures Scott's fickle, callous heart, breaking Mike's in the process.

The couple quickly departs for America. Mike hustles his way back to Portland by narcoleptic fits and starts, to take up with Bob's cronies. One night they see Scott, sleekly rehabilitated and married, entering a swank bistro. Bob hails Scott, who cuts him cruelly in front of his wealthy friends, as Hal cut Falstaff to the quick ("I know thee not, old man. . . . "). Bob sickens and dies. His funeral turns into a coked-up celebration, rowdy contrast to the staid rites for the deceased Mayor Favor taking place a few gravesites away. Scott, now heir apparent to his father's power, and Mike eye each other as across an abyss.

Many critics have found Van Sant's punked-up, homoeroticized Shakespeare clumsily off-putting. But beyond the fact that the director's transliteration possesses its own distinctive power, Van Sant's contemporary setting accurately exposes Prince Hal's problematic personality. In Shakespeare, the glory of Hal's language nearly obscures his unpleasant coldness. Van Sant uses Scott Favor to sharply foreground Hal's calculating nature. Rather than valiant struggle in the bloody field, we're given facile duplicity; naked, class-conscious striving for yuppie perks. Keanu Reeves' rather narrow range and shallow handsomeness are actually helpful on this score.

By comparison, Mike's pathological trustfulness, his wounded openness to the world—particularly his unrequited love for Scott—lend him a sort of cockeyed nobility reminiscent of that other holy naïf (and epileptic), Dostoyevsky's Prince Myshkin in *The Idiot*. River Phoenix is heartbreakingly perfect as Mike, with his bedraggled dress, bruised good looks, and wry, elliptical speech. Phoenix inevitably summons up recognitions of James Dean's vulnerable delinquent in *Rebel Without a Cause*, and of his tormented Cal Trask in *East of Eden*.

At times, Van Sant's view of trashed-out existence as critique against bourgeois complacency waxes heavy-handed. Scott's assumption of heterosexuality is also too pat by half. It's presented as a betrayal of gay bonding as stereotypical as any straight stereotype about gay love. But criticism melts before the buoyant, unstable fertility of Van Sant's invention, the unerring correctness of his cinematic choices. With perfect ease, he circulates between vérité reality (the hustlers' grimy, hilarious histories spoken directly to the camera are especially fine); surreality (the opening a wonderful case in point); and hyperreality (the detritus Mike takes from his pocket and shovels at a cashier—a condom, candy wrappers, bills—owns a diamondhard-edged life of its own. One intuits the jumble *is* his life.).

Despite its lurid subject matter, nothing prurient and little offensive will be discovered in *My Own Private Idaho*, unless one is put off by its subject matter. The film is surprisingly innocent. The hustlers, with their loopy johns and cracked dreams of glory, are never romanticized as in *Pretty Woman* but treated with evenhanded generosity. In two brief sex scenes, one sees swift tableaux vivants of the actors' naked limbs pressed silently against each other. The effect is somehow *calming*.

Idaho concludes upon a return to its beginning. Once more Mike stands by the same lonesome road, the sound track playing a plaintive rendition of "America" on the musical saw. "I'm a connoisseur of roads," muses Mike. "Been tasting roads my whole life. This road will never end. . . . It probably goes all around the world." He pitches onto the road. Two disreputable types stop their pickup, steal his shoes and rucksack, and depart. After a while, another car pulls over, an anonymous man gets out, carefully places somnolent Mike inside, then drives into the heartland. A laconic closing title—HAVE A NICE DAY.

The end is lovely, utterly strange as the beginning, when the road appeared like a "fucked-up face" and Mike took up his quest for the eternal (and eternally frustrating) maternal. One would think Scott's casual treachery and Bob's death would have imprinted the despair of his mother's abandonment even more hurtfully upon Mike's battered heart. But his final words are unaccountably cheerful. Is he practising near-psychotic denial? Or is he driven by the American nomad's perennial hopefulness before another frontier, another chance at whatever brass ring?

HARVEY R. GREENBERG

▪ Harvey R. Greenberg is Clinical Professor of Psychiatry at Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New York and author of *Movies on Your Mind*.

More Books!

Annual Book Roundup (cont'd)

I am happy to announce that the position of Book Review Editor for *Film Quarterly* has been accepted by Stephen Prince. He will begin tracking books, assigning reviews, and working with reviewers in the fall.

Stephen is a longtime book reviewer for *FQ* and his interests range widely, from American to Japanese cinema, from film theory to cult movies. His most recent publication is *Visions of Empire: Political Imagery in Contemporary American Film* (Praeger, 1992); in 1991 he published *The Warrior's Camera: The Cinema of Akira Kurosawa* (Princeton University Press). He is currently working on a film textbook.

Stephen teaches classes in film history and criticism in the Department of Communication Studies at Virginia Polytechnic and State University. His address is 11 Agnew Hall, Blacksburg, VA 24061-0311, and his telephone number is (703) 231-5044. All would-be reviewers should let him know if there are books they would like to write about (we have Guidelines for this which can be requested from me or from him).

I'm delighted that he has agreed to join *Film Quarterly*, and I thank him for taking on the work. Both I and *FQ* will benefit.

A.M.

Arab and African Film Making

By Lizbeth Malkmus and Roy Armes. London & New Jersey: Zed Books, Ltd., 1991.

Noting that the cinema is "not just a producer of autonomous artefacts," Lizbeth Malkmus and Roy Armes open *Arab and African Film Making* with a look at the development of many Arab and African popular media: publishing, broadcasting, recording. Not surprisingly, recording equipment first appeared in Arab and African countries as an ethnographic tool, part and parcel of "one of the crucial cultural effects of European colonialism: the denial of the essential fluidity of traditional African or Arab cultures."

That assertion stands as an instance of admirable candor. Studying and describing Arab and African art and artifacts inevitably freezes fluid historical circumstance into immutable, ahistorical "fact." Unfortunately for the authors, this also applies to *Arab and African Film Making* A few lines further, Malkmus and Armes backpedal into a position of suspect disinterest, claiming a clear view of their subject's society and psyche: "*From our present perspective* we can see that though music was wedded to virtually every key moment of African life . . . it was not itself immutably fixed" [emphasis added]. Even as they deny the possibility of representing Arab and African culture without disseminating an "ossification of tradition," Malkmus and Armes assume a perspective of analytical authority.

This Gordian knot—how to write about foreign art without hypostatizing one's own mastery over the material—isn't readily cut. Malkmus and Armes do try out a different approach, one that shifts "discussion of Arab and African film-making away from the customary concentration simply on questions of theme and content, so that the equally crucial issues of form can be highlighted."

What forms does one discuss, though, and who defines them? Examining Arab cinema, Malkmus divides her survey according to genres (epic, comic, dramatic) rather than chronology. To qualify her categories, she falls back on Western sources—Gilles Deleuze, Leo Braudy, and *The Anatomy of Criticism*: "Northrop Frye writes: 'the center of tragedy lies in the hero's isolation, not in the villain's betrayal,' and he goes on, as if he were actually describing *The Rebels*

[Tewfik Saleh, 1966], this is true 'even when the villain is, as he often is, a part of the hero himself.'"

The problem here lies not with the hero's predicament in *The Rebels* but with the inapplicability of *The Anatomy* to contemporary Egyptian cinema. Malkmus sounds more impressed with Frye's totalizing tactics ("as if he were actually describing") than with Saleh's directorial enterprise. Later, she makes reference to an even older Western archetype: "Actually, Hamlet's problem is not so far removed from that of some Arab cinema." While film-making in these countries "demands close contact with Europe," criticism of such film-making certainly does not.

The unfortunate references to Western forms occur more often in Malkmus's discussions of Arab films than in Armes' chapters on the cinema of sub-Saharan Africa. This difference in critical approach reflects the authors' backgrounds: Armes, best known for *Third World Film Making and the West*, is specifically a film scholar, whereas Malkmus is a scholar of literature. Literary criticism has a more hidebound formalist tradition than cinema studies, and Malkmus's work apparently stems from that tradition.

When they avoid Western models, Malkmus and Armes elucidate many of the aspects of Arab and African cinema that might escape foreign viewers. Armes convincingly brings out the voice of the African oral tradition "internalized within the unfolding action" of Haile Gerima's *Harvest 3,000 Years* (1974, Ethiopia) and Oumarou Ganda's *L'Exile* (1980, Niger), while contrasting such films to earlier works. Malkmus, a scholar of Arabic literature, illuminates her discussion of Arab comedy with a useful explanation of *hija*, a distinctly Arabic brand of derisive taunting. Perhaps most persuasively, Armes argues the deleterious effects of postcolonial nationalism—the most important factor in stemming the fluidity of Arab and African cultural identity—on the growth of indigenous film styles, making an especially strong case for the self-alienating influence of the Francophone *négritude* movement.

Persuasion, however, is not the aim of Malkmus and Armes. Their tone is more speculative than conclusive, and each page carries a recognition of the project's newness. Despite its paradigmatic flaws, *Arab and African Film Making* may be the most complete introduction to the subject yet. Working through a paucity of sources and screening opportunities, the authors provide a helpful biographical dictionary of Arab and African film-makers. There are mysterious omissions (Cheikh Oumar Sissoko, Thomas Mogotlane), and at least one obvious blunder (stills from Ousmane Sembene's *Emitai* and *Xala* are bluntly misidentified), which point out inroads and potholes for future scholars of Arab and African cinema. As Malkmus and Armes state in the introduction, though, "the book sets out to suggest lines of approach and enquiry only, and does not pretend to exhaust them." Hopefully we'll soon hear from indigenous Arab and African writers who selectively follow those lines.

MICHAEL SINGER

▪ Michael Singer is a Los Angeles-based freelance writer.

Blackout
Reinventing Women for Wartime British Cinema

By Antonia Lant. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991. $49.50 cloth; $15.95 paper.

Antonia Lant's *Blackout* poses an important question for film studies in general and feminist film theory in particular: What alternatives exist for the construction of the feminine, other than the fetishized female of Hollywood cinema?

In answering this question, Lant uses the British films of the World War II period as a litmus test for an alternative cinema practice. In these films, as part of the larger effort to create a new national unity, the representation of women underwent a fundamental change. The new image was both a construct and a reflection of women's new status as members of the armed forces and volunteers (creating a new entity—"the mobile woman") and guardians of the home front. Lant discusses how in their roles women were both encouraged and discouraged from abandoning female accoutrements such as makeup, fancy lingerie, and stylish hairdos, which have traditionally served to reinforce sexual difference. Against this background she analyzes *The Gentle Sex* and *Millions Like Us*, demonstrating how both films reflected the new reality.

Lant also discusses how the new image of women intersected with the adoption of a "realistic" cinema which emerged in England during the late 1930s, and how this aesthetic both served the purposes of the war effort and helped to establish for the first time a distinct British cinema.

Having established these parameters, Lant then takes up the question of "the Blackout" (in its original sense, the extinction of all lights during the air raids),

[Tewfik Saleh, 1966], this is true 'even when the villain is, as he often is, a part of the hero himself.'"

The problem here lies not with the hero's predicament in *The Rebels* but with the inapplicability of *The Anatomy* to contemporary Egyptian cinema. Malkmus sounds more impressed with Frye's totalizing tactics ("as if he were actually describing") than with Saleh's directorial enterprise. Later, she makes reference to an even older Western archetype: "Actually, Hamlet's problem is not so far removed from that of some Arab cinema." While film-making in these countries "demands close contact with Europe," criticism of such film-making certainly does not.

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She does discuss the issue of address in her analysis of *The Gentle Sex*, and where possible quotes from contemporary accounts of female viewers as they appeared in newspapers or magazines. These sections, along with her detailed discussion of *Perfect Strangers* and *Brief Encounter*, are the strongest part of the book. Also useful is the inclusion of extra-filmic material such as posters and cartoons. These are especially revealing as contested sites of discourse which often forward contradictory messages.

Lant ends her book with a discussion of the two versions of the Powell and Pressberger film, *A Canterbury Tale* (1944/1949), and the return to normalcy in British cinema. Here it seems to me she misses a chance to fully explore the signification of the heroine Allison, especially as she is one of the few "mobile women" presented in a central role to be included in this work.

Blackout provides a good starting point for further investigation into those areas of film history which brought forth female images other than those which have dominated Hollywood film. A comparison with other cinemas, for instance post-revolutionary Russia, would have been intriguing. Hopefully, other scholars will build on this work to delve into similar moments in history or pockets of resistance so that our understanding of female representation can be more complete.

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Bloody Sam
The Life and Films of Sam Peckinpah

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Marshall Fine's biography of Peckinpah is the only comprehensive source of information on Peckinpah's post-*Convoy* career and final years—Garner Simmons' *Peckinpah: A Portrait in Montage*, the only other book-length study of Peckinpah's life, was published before his final film and death and relied extensively on interviews conducted in the mid-1970s. Peckinpah remains one of the legendary maverick Hollywood figures, a man who lived as hard and self-destructively as many of his protagonists and who, as Fine's book makes clear, was adept at inspiring friends with intense devotion even while alienating others.

The director emerges in these pages as an intense, troubled, and complex man, one whose film style—edgy, tense, and nervous—reflected a passionate, mercurial personality. Fine interviewed Peckinpah's surviving family members, friends, and associates, and presents hitherto unavailable scenes and anecdotes from the director's life, many involving the director's losing battle with alcohol and later cocaine. (Other stories are more humorous, such as the time Peckinpah loaded a truck with crew members from *The Killer Elite*, armed them with automatic weapons firing blanks, and staged an assault on the Irving Thalberg Building at MGM.)

While examining Peckinpah's entire life, Fine concentrates on the decades when Peckinpah was active as a feature director, but he is relentless to the point of becoming jaundiced in his scrutiny of Peckinpah's flaws, especially when concentrating on the abusive alcoholic. What is unfortunately lost at times is a clear sense of how this troubled man managed to make some great pictures, how his talent thrived on personal chaos.

Peckinpah's last project was a pair of indifferently directed Julian Lennon music videos. As the old Iguana lay dying, he said to his ex-wife Begonia Palacios, "Do you know the last film I made was five minutes long?" In art as in life, despair and eloquent defeat were his true subjects.

STEPHEN PRINCE

▪ Stephen Prince teaches at the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

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Texts, Contexts, Histories

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What sustains our interest in *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*? In his *Looking Awry*, Slavoj Zizek refocuses attention on desire as a defining characteris-

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tic of appeal. He identifies process, more than resolution, as that which stimulates and pleases. If his claim holds, then one might argue that anticipation and ambiguity attract more interest and produce greater pleasure than do their transformation into perceptions of certainty and achievement. Following this reasoning, *Caligari* appeals by nurturing a dialectic of desire, precluding the foreclosure of its reception while encouraging efforts to do so. Whenever a voice articulates the closure of the *Caligari* narrative, whether it emerges from the cinematic diegesis or from discourse about the film, other voices intervene to open it again. This is precisely the interest Mike Budd highlights in the introduction to his anthology. His collection of essays on *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* defamiliarizes the film and its reception with interweaving critical, institutional, psychoanalytic, and feminist approaches that merge to create a kind of New Historical compendium.

In the opening essay, Budd locates the self-perpetuating dynamic of *Caligari* in its combination of classical and expressionistic narrative components. He posits commodification and critical reactions to it as the driving forces in the making of *Caligari*, asserting that it became above all a commercial attempt simultaneously to imitate (conventional) Hollywood film and to differentiate a (modernist) German product. According to his account, interest in the consumeristic exchange value (but also the potentially subversive quality) of *Caligari*'s "art" also characterized reception of the film in the United States, where avant-garde artists and intellectuals sought aesthetic alternatives and the institutions of culture swiftly assimilated their innovations. Budd thus emphasizes the necessity of historicizing analysis of the film, but he by no means fixes its meaning. Quite the contrary, he claims, closer attention to the inscription of diverging interests in the production and reception of *Caligari* opens it to an ever more differentiating process of reading and rereading.

In her essay, Kristin Thompson continues Budd's decentering project by questioning the most prevalent myths about the making of *Caligari* and its impact in Germany, France, and the United States in the 1920s. With meticulous attention to trade-journal accounts of the film's production and early reception, she convincingly challenges Erich Pommer's portrayal of his crucial role in the film's production as well as popular claims about the film's commercial weakness in the United States. In the process, Thompson presents a wealth of often overlooked information about *Caligari*, ranging from details about the Lixi Studio, where the film was shot, to the probable attenuating influence of blind-booking practices on the film's initial run in Germany and the mediating inclusion of a prologue and epilogue for the Capitol premiere in New York.

One might conclude that Thompson's contribution seeks to set the record straight, to close the historiographical account of the film. However, embedded within her discussion are numerous invitations for further exploration. For example, her subversion of Pommer's account raises questions about the character of and motivations for his narrative. (Budd also alludes to the extent to which Pommer's and the other male stories about *Caligari* can be analyzed as patriarchal narratives of mastery, but more could be done with this.)

The remaining three essays practice socio-psychological approaches to the film. The first is a reprint of Thomas Elsaesser's essay on social mobility and the fantastic in German silent cinema. Elsaesser challenges Kracauer's reduction of German history and film history, offering *Caligari* and other films as examples of the ways in which the fantastic appears as an effect of the artist-intellectual's and the petit-bourgeois spectator's defense against challenges to their perceptions of mastery and control. The second essay is an English translation of Catherine Clément's well-known reading of *Caligari* based on the perception of an analogy between Drs. Freud and Caligari. Like Elsaesser, Clément alludes to Lacanian conceptions of the gaze, the uncanny, hysteria, and the Other in developing her somewhat impressionistic but very insightful reading of cinematic and psychoanalytic discourse. She does so to suggest the ways in which both employ similar tropes of fantasy and seduction to enact the anxiety of the (male and female) bourgeois about the process of identity formation in modernity. In the final essay, Patrice Petro offers another perspective on Clément's essay to establish a context for adapting the critique of the conventional male identity-in-crisis narrative from her influential study of female spectatorship in *Joyless Streets* (1989). She asserts the possibility for (female) spectators to perceive Cesare as Jane's double; the somnambulist equivalent of the female hysteric whose power is a projection of male desire for mastery but who also ultimately becomes a potent threat to male control. In the end, Petro seems to have affirmed the male subjectivity-in-crisis allegory, but with the crucial qualification that patriarchal figures of woman can be seen to motivate the crisis, at least partially, and thus threaten the stability of narrative logic and male spectatorship. Ultimately, Petro suggests, patriarchy becomes the author of its own instability.

Readers of Budd's anthology will discern a dialogue among the contributions as well as between them and the appended texts by scriptwriter Hans Janowitz and Kracauer. This nurtures the defamiliarizing process of reception that Budd intends. If there is a weakness in the appendix, it is the selected bibliography with only 11 items on *Caligari* and Weimar cinema. Those who wish to consider other connections in expanding the dialogue will do better to consult the notes to individual essays or the bibliographies of other works, such as S.S. Prawer's *Caligari's Children* (1980). Budd's collection does encourage readers to enjoy the process of *Caligari*'s reception and also to experience the pleasure associated with gathering specific insights along the way. Its quest for verifiable information about the production and reception of the film, while affording a sense of security about our cognitive ability, also invites us to consider the problems associated with the corresponding drive to master and control. As the psychoanalytically informed essays in the collection assert, such urges can result in the kind of reductionism Kracauer practices, the psychotic behavior of Drs. Freud and Caligari, and the patriarchal self-subversion to which Petro refers. With this in mind, it seems much more preferable to embrace the process that Budd's anthology successfully nurtures.

BRUCE MURRAY

▪ Bruce Murray teaches at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Classics and Cinema

Edited by Martin M. Winkler. Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1991. $21.00.

Homer and Schwarzenegger? Why not? Look closer, those who doubt: deep into her essay on "The Classical Amazon in Contemporary Cinema," Kristina M. Passman, an assistant professor of classical languages and literatures at the University of Maine, remarks that Sarah, the female protagonist in *The Terminator*, grows beyond the stereotype of the Amazon warrior depicted in previous films such as *Conan the Barbarian* and *Red Sonja* to become a woman who " . . . will continue to fight and will also be a *mother*" (95).

Classics and Cinema is clearly the kind of title bound to scare away even the most hardy film buffs and scholars. Certainly this first gathering of papers by classicists, reprinted as a special issue of *The Bucknell Review*, is a "change of pace from standard academic procedure," as editor Martin M. Winkler notes, for scholars more used to delving into Sappho, Ovid, and irregular Latin verbs than into Ford, Polanski, and George Lucas. But on balance, despite several predictably pedantic and/or naïve pieces, the collection bears testimony to the fruitful possibilities of combining "ancient" knowledge with cinematic perspectives.

We should not be completely surprised. Remember it was no less an imposing classicist than William Arrowsmith who, some dozen years ago, spoke of film as "the future of the humanities." Peter W. Rose echoes such a perspective when he writes, in the first essay of the collection, "Film literacy for a modern student should be a fundamental component of any 'cultural literacy' worthy of the name" (25).

The biggest shortcoming of the book, however, is that few of these specialists in ancient worlds have made any effort to take on even the most elementary texts of film theory and criticism or to include any film scholars in their dialogue with one another. Thus a certain defiant and willful shortsightedness pervades several pieces and keeps others from taking an insight and turning it into a convincing argument.

That warning aside, there are pleasures to mine—especially from those classicists who have done their homework. Frederick Ahl of Cornell, for instance, takes Robin Wood to task over his theories of the horror film by quoting Ovid and *The Bacchae*, and James R. Baron explores *9 to 5* not as any variation on the screwball formula, but as a full-bodied (breasted?) Aristophanic comedy in pattern and perspective (yes, Violet Newstead as Lysistrata). Furthermore, Mary-Kay Gamel deconstructs Thomas Sobchack's analysis of genre to posit *Chinatown* as a modern Greek tragedy. And Jon Solomon, who earlier wrote the informative *The Ancient World in the Cinema* (New York: Barnes, 1978), explores the fascinating topic of how Hollywood chose music for "ancient" films such as *Cleopatra* with references to the little documented area of classical Greek or Roman music.

Ironically, almost all of the "ancient" gaze in this text is toward the classical Hollywood film. Very little attention is paid to Greek cinema (except to Cacoyannis) or to Italian film (again with only a mention of the easy target of Fellini's *Satyricon*). Marianne McDonald's essay on Cacoyannis's *Iphigenia*, however, must be mentioned as a model of writing informed by both the classics and an awareness of film language (she has written the book *Euripides in Cinema: The Heart Made*

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BRUCE MURRAY

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Classics and Cinema

Edited by Martin M. Winkler. Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1991. $21.00.

Homer and Schwarzenegger? Why not? Look closer, those who doubt: deep into her essay on "The Classical Amazon in Contemporary Cinema," Kristina M. Passman, an assistant professor of classical languages and literatures at the University of Maine, remarks that Sarah, the female protagonist in *The Terminator*, grows beyond the stereotype of the Amazon warrior depicted in previous films such as *Conan the Barbarian* and *Red Sonja* to become a woman who " . . . will continue to fight and will also be a *mother*" (95).

Classics and Cinema is clearly the kind of title bound to scare away even the most hardy film buffs and scholars. Certainly this first gathering of papers by classicists, reprinted as a special issue of *The Bucknell Review*, is a "change of pace from standard academic procedure," as editor Martin M. Winkler notes, for scholars more used to delving into Sappho, Ovid, and irregular Latin verbs than into Ford, Polanski, and George Lucas. But on balance, despite several predictably pedantic and/or naïve pieces, the collection bears testimony to the fruitful possibilities of combining "ancient" knowledge with cinematic perspectives.

We should not be completely surprised. Remember it was no less an imposing classicist than William Arrowsmith who, some dozen years ago, spoke of film as "the future of the humanities." Peter W. Rose echoes such a perspective when he writes, in the first essay of the collection, "Film literacy for a modern student should be a fundamental component of any 'cultural literacy' worthy of the name" (25).

The biggest shortcoming of the book, however, is that few of these specialists in ancient worlds have made any effort to take on even the most elementary texts of film theory and criticism or to include any film scholars in their dialogue with one another. Thus a certain defiant and willful shortsightedness pervades several pieces and keeps others from taking an insight and turning it into a convincing argument.

That warning aside, there are pleasures to mine—especially from those classicists who have done their homework. Frederick Ahl of Cornell, for instance, takes Robin Wood to task over his theories of the horror film by quoting Ovid and *The Bacchae*, and James R. Baron explores *9 to 5* not as any variation on the screwball formula, but as a full-bodied (breasted?) Aristophanic comedy in pattern and perspective (yes, Violet Newstead as Lysistrata). Furthermore, Mary-Kay Gamel deconstructs Thomas Sobchack's analysis of genre to posit *Chinatown* as a modern Greek tragedy. And Jon Solomon, who earlier wrote the informative *The Ancient World in the Cinema* (New York: Barnes, 1978), explores the fascinating topic of how Hollywood chose music for "ancient" films such as *Cleopatra* with references to the little documented area of classical Greek or Roman music.

Ironically, almost all of the "ancient" gaze in this text is toward the classical Hollywood film. Very little attention is paid to Greek cinema (except to Cacoyannis) or to Italian film (again with only a mention of the easy target of Fellini's *Satyricon*). Marianne McDonald's essay on Cacoyannis's *Iphigenia*, however, must be mentioned as a model of writing informed by both the classics and an awareness of film language (she has written the book *Euripides in Cinema: The Heart Made*

Visible, Philadelphia: Centrum, 1983) as she explains how Cacoyannis manages to find cinematic equivalents for what Euripides needed a chorus to explain. But glaringly absent from this book, for instance, is any mention of the most important Greek film of the past 20 years, Theodore Angelopoulos's *The Travelling Players* (1975), which is dialectically and ironically constructed on the *Oresteia* trilogy.

Should there be a *Classics and Cinema II?* Definitely. But such a book should come into being under at least two conditions: first, with a true coming together of classicists and film studies specialists in an open discourse, and second, with the selection of a more inviting title!

ANDREW HORTON

▪ Andrew Horton teaches at Loyola University in New Orleans.

Feminism Without Women
Culture and Criticism in a "Postfeminist" Age

By Tania Modleski. New York: Routledge, Chapman and Hall, 1991. $39.95 cloth; $19.95 paper.

In Tania Modleski's *Feminism Without Women: Culture and Criticism in a "Postfeminist" Age*, the "Postfeminist" of the subtitle is carefully highlighted by quotation marks, suggesting the author's reservations about the term, perhaps her reluctance to lend it credibility or to accept its implications. However, by her final chapter, she is referring to a postfeminist age (136) and a postfeminist play with gender (163), dropping the quotation marks and thus suggesting an acquiescence and acceptance of the term. This capitulation is countered by Modleski's regular references to feminism and feminist criticism as continuing and viable in the wake of the disturbing multileveled and often angry responses they have evoked. Indeed, in pursuing her project, "to show [cultural criticism's] complicity with [mass culture] in assuming the goals of feminism to have been attained," Modleski exposes the intense hostility toward women that is embedded in contemporary cultural criticism and cultural artifacts, particularly movies. In doing so she maintains a thoroughly feminist stance in spite of the slip from "postfeminism" to postfeminism and the ever-present dangers inherent in critiquing an ideology and a culture in and through which one's own identity has been formed.

At first brush, Modleski appears to strike a consistently negative stance as she challenges an array of prefeminist, feminist and "feminist," and "postfeminist" critics, from Stanley Cavell to Elaine Showalter to John Fiske, Donna Haraway, and Andrew Ross, from Barthes to Baudrillard and Freud to Deleuze. She reminds us of the extreme vigilance feminism demands, noting our existence "inside ideology" and our consequent status as "victims, down to the very depths of our psyches, of political and cultural domination (even though we are never ONLY victims)" (45). This realization prompts her to question the assumptions upon which critical positions are based, revealing the pervasiveness of feminism's impact and the insidiousness of the backlash that impact has generated, a backlash often "carried out not against feminism but in its very name" (x).

Analyzing recent developments in critical theory, Modleski asks, "What's in these new developments *for feminism* and for women?" Her question leads her to explore, among other critical phenomena, the move from a focus on women's experience and women's writing to gender studies; the abandonment of the category "woman" in an effort to avoid essentialism; the identification of mass culture with the feminine (i.e., consumption, the readerly, passivity, willlessness); and the evaluation of the notions of authorship and authority. In each of these areas, Modleski's inquiry uncovers concepts and strategies that undermine feminist goals: "bringing men back to center stage and diverting feminists from tasks more pressing" (6); making "*any* generalizations about or political claims on behalf of a group called 'women' virtually impossible"; linking culture with the feminine in ways that thwart women's ability to question their role within a culture (33–34); and denying historical or ideological significance to women, continuing to equate them with the trivial and keeping them mute (50–57).

When she turns to the analysis of specific movies, movies as diverse as *Top Gun, Full Metal Jacket, Three Men and a Baby, Pee-wee's Big Adventure, Wings of Desire, Gorillas in the Mist,* and *Ghost*, Modleski finds multiple manifestations of misogyny. Whether collapsing military into sexual conquest, finding sexually charged satisfaction in the violence of military action (62–63), infantilizing women while sexualizing female babies (78), or fleeing the responsibility and commitments of adulthood (96), male fantasies and fears are played out at women's expense. Masochism, regression, and fetishization are among the psychoanalytical mechanisms operating to intensify these manifestations of the current backlash against feminism's real if limited gains.

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Collectively, women have been the object of male misogyny but, as Modleski indicates, African-American women have occupied "the site of displacement" of both white men and white women's fears and anxieties (121) as well as those of African-American males. Presented "either as too literally a woman (reduced to her biology and her biological functions) or in crucial ways not really a woman at all" (like Whoopi Goldberg's characters in *Ghost* and *Jumpin' Jack Flash),* African-American women have been made to function as "the man's *or* the white woman's bodily scapegoat" (132–33). Not only does Modleski explore this phenomenon but she also analyzes the position of African-American men vis-à-vis European Americans. She does so mainly through a critique of *Gorillas in the Mist* that convincingly shows how the film functions primarily not as a biographical depiction of Diane Fossey but as one more confirmation of white man's superiority and a justification of that power and privilege over men of color and women.

Given Modleski's systematic and uncompromising exploration of the backlash against feminism and the evidence she finds to indicate its breadth and intensity, *Feminism Without Women* disturbs and chills. However, even while focusing primarily on the alarming antifeminist response to women's recent moves toward equality, she never lets go of feminism's potential. She finds numerous critics who undercut it one way or another, but she also recognizes many of the writers whose insights are helping to realize it, among them Virginia Woolf, Sojourner Truth, Juliane Schiesari, Lee Edelman, Gloria Anzaldua, Biddy Martin, Chandra Mohanty, bell hooks, Rita Felski, Teresa de Lauretis, Judith Mayne, Alice Walker, and Valerie Smith. With Modleski, these theorists and activists are providing the ideas and examples to challenge antifeminist assumptions.

By choosing them, given their ethnic diversity, Modleski moves beyond our traditional dependence on Eurocentric male perspectives (perspectives she adapts rather than adopts in her psychoanalytic redesign) and acknowledges that "feminism needs to insist on the complex multiple and cross-cutting nature of identity" (120). Such a recognition opens up the possibility of all women joining together to overthrow the ideology that oppresses us (134) and to fulfill feminism's promise.

JANICE R. WELSCH

▪ Janice R. Welsch teaches at Western Illinois University.

Film Hieroglyphs
Ruptures in Classical Cinema

By Tom Conley. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990. $39.95 cloth; $15.95 paper.

The houselights go down. A flickering beam strikes out through the murk. Images assemble. In the dominant case, it would seem, these images coalesce into a story and we go beyond the surface of the screen to enter into an imaginary dramatic world. Only in a few cases—rare historical or theoretical ones—does the practice of cinema work in a different way in order to crystallize our attention on the screen itself and its inscriptions of images as writing.

Significant manifestations of this cinema of writing, suggests Tom Conley, were the Surrealist and Dadaist cinemas of the French 1920s, where words appeared on the screen (for example, Duchamp's *Anemic Cinema*) to be shorn of a major aspect of their signification and become superficial visual figures. In such cases, writing renders manifest the screen as flat surface, as a blank slate for textual play. And this we expect from a European avant-garde cinema like that of the 1920s. The bold gambit of Conley's *Film Hieroglyphs*, though, is to argue the possibility of reading seemingly transparent Hollywood cinema as a writing—to stop at the level of the screen and read Hollywood films as if they were literally nothing but signs splayed across the white rectangle. What if we took the image itself—not the drama behind it—for the film and read that? As Conley says in one of the films *(White Heat)* of Raoul Walsh (a privileged director for Conley): "It remains an auteur's film that celebrates a surface of characters that work through and across their narration, in ways that require the spectator to read a hieroglyph of space, of letters, of movement, and of silence" (188).

Inspired by (among others) Jacques Derrida's deconstruction of phonic presence and its rearticulation within a larger economy of writing *(écriture)*; by Freud's dream-logics of displacement and condensation; by the Surrealists' theory and practice; by the Eisensteinian concept of the cinematic hieroglyph; by Marie-Claire Ropars's application of deconstruction to the field of cinema; and especially by medieval theory of the emblem as sign that is both visual and verbal (an area of study Conley has a national reputation in), Conley sets out the most extended demonstration of a process of film reading that would fully and directly be precisely a reading.

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For Conley, film reading begins with a literal look at the image on the screen. Thus, to take just one example from *Film Hieroglyphs*, in *Scarlet Street* the opening credits—wherein the names "Edward G. Robinson" and "Joan Bennett" appear in large letters, and below and between them is the little word "in"—become a playing out of the whole narrative itself where, as Conley puts it, all the ambiguity revolves around the sexual issue of whether or not the Chris Cross character is ever in intercourse with Kitty (and, here, Conley makes reference to the medieval theory of allegory where higher regions indicate spirit and lower regions indicate the material possessions of the carnal). For Conley, no detail is not readable, so that even the words of the end of *Scarlet Street*—where below "The End" we read "A Universal Release"—play out the film's thematic concerns insofar as there is no end really for the eternally damned Chris and certainly no release from the torments of the ghostly Kitty and Johnny. In a summation of his thoughts, Conley explains that "In *Scarlet Street* elements of writing on screen open an endless movement of meaning that collapses the mimetic frame of the film. The signifier runs through and across the work and raises issues involving cinema, writing, and the gamut of representation" (46).

But beyond the willed craftiness of such readings, there is another, wilder, even more audacious gambit to Conley's reading. He argues that what he uncovers by such willful attention to the visual surface of the film is not something he is *adding* to the film as clever reader but something that is actually *in* the film, part of its objective meaning, part of its quite historically situatable response to the social context of its time. He is offering not just a theory of film, a reading of films, but a history of film. Historically, the narratives of film say one thing; historically, the images of film say other things. For example, where feminists have begun to argue the homosocial or even homoerotic substratum of various male genres (the war film, the Western) but do so at the level of plot or evident narrative codes (for example, glances and shot/reaction shots), Conley argues a homoeroticism of the image itself, so that freezing a frame in, say, *Objective, Burma* can seem to reveal two soldiers supposedly talking about battle plans but, visually, seeming to engage in a planning of sex with a third soldier in their line of sight.

Consonant with other theorists who have recently begun to argue that textual and stylistic qualities of mainstream films can be read as allegorical responses to their own conditions of production—so that, for example, Fredric Jameson (in *Signatures of the Visible*) can read the conflict between two acting styles in *Dog Day Afternoon* as the conflict between two moments in the increasing encroachment of a coldly alienating late capitalism, or David James (in *Allegories of Cinema*) can read the cheapness of *Easy Rider* as part of its supposedly oppositional statement—Conley wants to argue that the writing that film is, is its way of writing a response to the dominant film industry. If the explicit narrative of the Hollywood film tells one story—a story that turns us away from attention to the Hollywood machine itself—the images when read for themselves literally reveal another story, one *about* Hollywood, about its power and about the ways that the power can be played with, exceeded. A film can talk of its own making, and thereby turn attention away from story to the telling of story.

Although what I am offering here is ostensibly a review of Conley's book, I am not sure it matters to offer a judgment on this approach. Some readers of *Film Hieroglyphs* (for example, those inspired by French deconstruction and especially by the American revision of deconstruction by Yale School literary criticism and by film deconstructionists like Robert Ray and Greg Ulmer or David Wills and Peter Brunette) will find it a masterful further demonstration of the power of filmic writing as excessive force, of the insistence of the letter in the play of the text. Others (some of whom won't read the book) will undoubtedly regard it as one more example of a frivolous, nonverifiable abandonment of a project of historical poetics. One might imagine, though, a middle ground in which Conley's arguments are regarded as historical hypotheses to be tested. For example, it seems evident that many of the films of the early European art cinema play on the inscription of signs onto the screen and, through this and other means, foreground the screen as such. It also seems true that certain émigré directors—like Fritz Lang—take a special attitude toward the image that is not an attitude of transparency and narrative vehiculation: as Conley shows, for example, there is a layering of planes in the Langian image that make of the screen a complicated and textured, even textual, site. For some readers, it will be a possible jump to leap from evidences such as these to Conley's full-fledged argument about the image as a form of writing even within the midst of Hollywood narrative cinema.

Conley's postface—on the errancy of Mona in Varda's *Sans toit ni loi*—suggests another way to imagine a historical grounding for Conley's textualist argument. The directors Conley deals with—Lang, Renoir, Rossellini, Walsh, and, to a lesser degree, Varda and Siodmak—are all darlings of French

auteurism and especially of that *Cahiers* auteurism that is intrigued by and invested in errant rebellion (whether this be the rebellion of errant figures in the auteur films, or the errant directors of these films), in a tough-minded explosiveness of the image, in an allegorization of narrative so that it speaks of its own conditions of submission and revolt. We might then compare Conley's version of rebellious history to Gilles Deleuze's in his masterful two volumes on the Movement-Image and the Time-Image. Deleuze and Conley both write of a postwar overthrow of American action cinema figured in a new European cinema and in existentially aware auteurs who deal with errancy, passivity, witnessing, disconnection. Underlying both Deleuze and Conley, indeed, is the force of the wartime and postwar existentialist discovery of the brute facticity of a time that weighs in heavily with all its inescapable here-ness.

Conley argues, for example, that the films of a Walsh or of the noir directors often deal with characters trying to remain tough—trying to evolve a project—in a universe that exceeds them mockingly. As Conley argues of the "omnipotence of nauseously greasy food" in *The Killers*, "The Swede's heartburn appears to be an aftereffect not just of the greasy spoon but also of the sight of a world consisting only of material shapes. All of a sudden the film seems to tap into a graphic tradition of European origin and of existential intensity more common to Renoir, Sartre, and Rossellini than Universal Studios or Hollywood" (163).

Conley represents a distinctive and even unique voice in film studies. Up to now, his writings have only been available as essays dispersed sporadically in some of the more obscure journals of criticism. It will be interesting to see if the assemblage of his film writings into a single volume—where the individually crafty writings come to take on the force of an overall emphatic argument in film theory and about the shapes of film history—will have any impact on the field of cinema studies and the ways it thinks about the ways films can make meanings.

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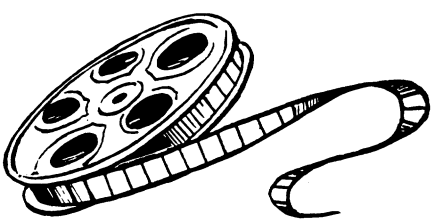

The Films of Nicholas Ray

By Geoff Andrew. London: Charles Letts & Co., 1991. N.p.

Nicholas Ray is perhaps our most neglected great director: the intense, small-scale miniatures of his black-on-white films of 1948–52 and the vast shattered canvases of his color, CinemaScope films of the later 1950s and early 1960s are underappreciated masterworks of the American cinema, approachable from many angles, including, as here, the briskly commonsensical one of Geoff Andrew. *The Films of Nicholas Ray* is, amazingly, the first English-language book on Ray of any substance; not counting Blaine Allen's very useful annotated bibliography it is, in fact, only the second English-language book on him at all. (The less said of John Francis Kriedl's 1977 Twayne volume *Nicholas Ray* the better; Kriedl devoted half of his book to *Rebel Without a Cause* as if it were the be-all and end-all of Ray's career.)

Geoff Andrew's crisp survey of Ray's tormented oeuvre lacks the deliriousness of Ray's French enthusiasts (e.g., Godard's "the cinema is Nicholas Ray") but is very much in line with the British auteurist tradition: useful, intelligent, rational. While Andrew does take advantage of Bernard Eisenschitz's biography of Ray (Paris, 1990), and while I do admire his comments on Ray's later years (including his criticism of Wim Wenders' "collaboration" with Ray, *Lightning Over Water*), reading his book is otherwise like reading a special issue of *Movie*, circa 1965. Like the critics of that journal, Andrew is very good at retelling the films' stories, outlining recurrent themes, and relating them to Ray's visual style. He points out how Ray's training with Frank Lloyd Wright contributed to the architectural quality of his films, their strong use of verticals and horizontals; he's also good on Ray's use of color. He gets bonus points for his commentary on a forgotten half-hour of TV Ray directed in 1954, "High Green Wall."

All this granted, Andrew could have been a little stronger in relating known details of Ray's life to his work: Ray's work collecting folk songs with Alan Lomax probably affected his sympathetic portrayals of outsiders (gypsies, teenagers, and "Quinn the Eskimo" in *The Savage Innocents*), for instance, and I would like to know more about how Ray's "disciplinarian father . . . a secret drinker" might relate to the tormented father-son relationships of so many of Ray's films. Instead, absurdly, Andrew evokes tired old Oedipus

auteurism and especially of that *Cahiers* auteurism that is intrigued by and invested in errant rebellion (whether this be the rebellion of errant figures in the auteur films, or the errant directors of these films), in a tough-minded explosiveness of the image, in an allegorization of narrative so that it speaks of its own conditions of submission and revolt. We might then compare Conley's version of rebellious history to Gilles Deleuze's in his masterful two volumes on the Movement-Image and the Time-Image. Deleuze and Conley both write of a postwar overthrow of American action cinema figured in a new European cinema and in existentially aware auteurs who deal with errancy, passivity, witnessing, disconnection. Underlying both Deleuze and Conley, indeed, is the force of the wartime and postwar existentialist discovery of the brute facticity of a time that weighs in heavily with all its inescapable here-ness.

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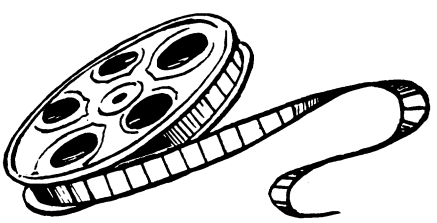

The Films of Nicholas Ray

By Geoff Andrew. London: Charles Letts & Co., 1991. N.p.

Nicholas Ray is perhaps our most neglected great director: the intense, small-scale miniatures of his black-on-white films of 1948–52 and the vast shattered canvases of his color, CinemaScope films of the later 1950s and early 1960s are underappreciated masterworks of the American cinema, approachable from many angles, including, as here, the briskly commonsensical one of Geoff Andrew. *The Films of Nicholas Ray* is, amazingly, the first English-language book on Ray of any substance; not counting Blaine Allen's very useful annotated bibliography it is, in fact, only the second English-language book on him at all. (The less said of John Francis Kriedl's 1977 Twayne volume *Nicholas Ray* the better; Kriedl devoted half of his book to *Rebel Without a Cause* as if it were the be-all and end-all of Ray's career.)

Geoff Andrew's crisp survey of Ray's tormented oeuvre lacks the deliriousness of Ray's French enthusiasts (e.g., Godard's "the cinema is Nicholas Ray") but is very much in line with the British auteurist tradition: useful, intelligent, rational. While Andrew does take advantage of Bernard Eisenschitz's biography of Ray (Paris, 1990), and while I do admire his comments on Ray's later years (including his criticism of Wim Wenders' "collaboration" with Ray, *Lightning Over Water*), reading his book is otherwise like reading a special issue of *Movie*, circa 1965. Like the critics of that journal, Andrew is very good at retelling the films' stories, outlining recurrent themes, and relating them to Ray's visual style. He points out how Ray's training with Frank Lloyd Wright contributed to the architectural quality of his films, their strong use of verticals and horizontals; he's also good on Ray's use of color. He gets bonus points for his commentary on a forgotten half-hour of TV Ray directed in 1954, "High Green Wall."

All this granted, Andrew could have been a little stronger in relating known details of Ray's life to his work: Ray's work collecting folk songs with Alan Lomax probably affected his sympathetic portrayals of outsiders (gypsies, teenagers, and "Quinn the Eskimo" in *The Savage Innocents*), for instance, and I would like to know more about how Ray's "disciplinarian father . . . a secret drinker" might relate to the tormented father-son relationships of so many of Ray's films. Instead, absurdly, Andrew evokes tired old Oedipus

when the relevant myth seems to me to be the Abraham of the Bible who moves to sacrifice his own son (explicitly cited by Ray in *Bigger Than Life*).

Where Andrew really falls short, of course, is in ignoring film theory, which does not qualify or undermine auteur studies but can instead enrich them. Andrew certainly might have done more, for example, with the move in Ray's work, between 1949 and 1955, from political to personal concerns, as glossed in these pages by Peter Biskind in 1974. Ray's miraculous—given his career with radical theater in the 1930s and 1940s—escape from the blacklist is not given sufficient attention either. Also passed over lightly is *Rebel*'s conceptions of masculinity: it may be Ray who is "patriarchal" in condemming Dad-in-an-apron, rather than Jim Stark. Even taking Ray on his own terms, Andrew might have done more with the intense romanticism of his work and the conflict between adolescence and maturity evoked by Ray's best films.

This said, inasmuch as Andrew's ambition is to draw attention to Ray's work and provide a useful springboard for further discussion of its "treasures," *The Films of Nicholas Ray* is completely admirable. Even a beginner's survey, however, should do more to situate Ray both in his own time and in the 1990s than Andrew does here.

GREGG RICKMAN

▪ Gregg Rickman is completing his latest book, *Variable Man: The Lives of Philip K. Dick.*

Find the Director and Other Hitchcock Games

By Thomas M. Leitch. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1991. $35.00 cloth; $15.00 paper.

Hitchcock's malicious playfulness has long posed a problem for his admirers and detractors. As Thomas M. Leitch points out, "Hitchcock's defenders from Robin Wood to Lesley Brill . . . rescue the director from his antic reputation by recasting him in a conservative mold, as if the primary function of his games were to set up a resolution." But the main orchestrator of this "antic reputation" was Hitchcock himself, who was notorious for playing practical jokes on people outside his films as well as within them. (One that has never to my knowledge found its way into print was relayed to me by Laura Mulvey. Hitchcock, liking to be called "Hitch" only by his closest friends, would initiate a person into his inner circle by taking him—or her?—aside and confiding in his stentorian stage whisper, "I have no cock."

The last chapter of *Find the Director*, a book determined to take Hitchcock's games seriously, covers Hitchcock's deft orchestration of his reputation in the mid-60s (*Hitchcock/Truffaut* dates from 1967), the period in which it most needed rescuing. This final chapter would have made a much more accessible first chapter than the one Leitch provides, which is tough going. In it, Leitch is at pains to establish ambitious claims: that Hitchcock's celebrated cameo appearances (in some of his films, in the trailers to *Psycho, The Birds,* and *Frenzy*, and on TV) are emblematic instances of playfulness that "can serve as a paradigm for cinematic pleasure" at large; and that these same cameos "pose serious difficulties for leading models of narrative." Leitch's way of clearing the ground for his subsequent discussion of Hitchcock is accordingly (and laboriously) to hack through these "models"—the communicative, the psychoanalytic, the mimetic—one by one, even though none of the thickets that get uprooted have much to do with Hitchcock, having been planted (and tangled) by people unconcerned either with Hitchcock or even with Leitch's favorite word, "fun." The entrance to Leitch's book thus works as a denial of access to all but specialists, rather like the factory sign in Marx's *Capital*: No Admittance Except on Business.

Hitchcock's reappearance in a book that deals ostensibly (if not exclusively) with his personal appearances comes as something of a relief, particularly since Leitch knows Hitchcock's films inside out and can write engagingly and unpretentiously about them once he gives himself permission to do so. He has a good eye and shows a rare and altogether welcome familiarity with the literary sources of Hitchcock's films. *Find the Director* bristles with *aperçus* and insights which suggest that a really good book is trying to escape the clutches of narrativity and diegesis and come up for air: The 1934 *Man Who Knew Too Much* is "treacherously understated"; *Secret Agent* and *Sabotage* are "punitively depressing"; in *Spellbound*, Hitchcock "takes the McGuffin as seriously as his characters do"; *Frenzy* is his "most brilliantly unpleasant film . . . the most extreme example of Hitchcock's ludic hostility toward his characters and his audience."

These observations, like the characterization of *Family Plot*'s "pervasive air of benignant neutrality," are to my mind very much on the money. But I'm not

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sure Leitch has found the right hook to hang them on. "Hitchcock's games," he says, "cannot be sustained without *periodically* cheating against their own rules" (emphasis mine); and this means that Hitchcock's games with his audience enable Leitch not just to characterize but also to periodize Hitchcock's films. Each new period is marked by a film that breaks a tried-and-true "contract" with his audience. Even though this schematization is in the event not held to consistently—indeed, it couldn't be—it leads Leitch into teleological judgments his argument can ill afford. "Once the bomb goes off on a crowded bus in *Sabotage*," he assures us, "audiences can never be sure for the rest of Hitchcock's career that things will turn out all right for their identification figures." This is to carry the idea of Hitchcock as Master of Suspense beyond all reasonable bounds. Hitchcock saw the explosion in *Sabotage*, after the event, for what it was: a sadistic blunder that kills off not just a poor litte boy but also—for a British audience in the 1930s, yet!—a poor, innocent *dog*. Another result of Leitch's perhaps oddly orthodox periodization is that the four Paramount films—*Rear Window, The Trouble with Harry, To Catch a Thief,* and the lamentable remake of *The Man Who Knew Too Much*—get lumped together. Now if the last named is as conformist as its British predecessor was subversive, as Leitch seems to think, *Rear Window*, on most readings (though not on Lesley Brill's—see my review of *The Hitchcock Romance* and Tania Modleski's *The Women Who Knew Too Much* in *Film Quarterly*, vol. 42, no. 4, pp. 40–42), has much more in common with the British version, no matter which studio it was made for. This puts Leitch in a bind. "*Rear Window*," he insists, "has an ending—the substitution of an ideal community of lovers for a pathological collection of deformed lovers—that does not really resolve the problems the film has posed." If there is an Oscar for understatement, pass the envelope now. Leitch is a lot closer to Lesley Brill's oh-so-serious desire for "resolution" than he might feel comfortable believing. And once again, it's Hitchcock who gets the last laugh.

PAUL THOMAS

▪ Paul Thomas teaches at the University of California at Berkeley.

How Do I Look?
Queer Film and Video

Edited by the Bad Object-Choice collective. Seattle: Bay Press, 1991. $16.95.

The first film and mass culture anthology to feature the word "queer" in its title may not directly address the notion of queerness, but taken together its essays suggest what a queer approach might feel like. *How Do I Look?* is the result of a 1989 conference at the Anthology Film Archives in New York City. After considering other titles, the Bad Object-Choice group decided to call their conference "How Do I Look?" because "[d]esire, gaze, spectatorship, representation—it was all there, but with just the right camp inflection to suggest a queer event." Readers of this collection of conference papers are actually given a sense of this "event" through edited transcripts of the discussions which followed each presentation. The dialogues created between these follow-up discussions and the six essays often foster the kind of provocative "invitation into the messy spaces" of queerness Kobena Mercer finds in Robert Mapplethorpe's photographs.

These audience comments also invest *How Do I Look?* with a queer activist aura of "confronting hybridity" (Isaac Julien's term) rather than mechanically reciting a "mantra of race, class, gender, and sexuality" (as Mercer puts it) in relation to lesbian and gay culture and politics. Equally appealing is the collection's attempt to "describe intersections of theoretical study with collective political struggle" by presenting a range of topics and critical approaches in language that is sophisticated yet lucid. While one could argue about the degree to which *How Do I Look?* is successful in these endeavors, most of the writers take care to foreground the "real life" issues at stake in their queer sociological, anthropological, Marxist, psychoanalytic, and/or feminist explorations of queer culture—and only one or two essays become caught up in specialist terminology.

With debates about censorship and political correctness as part of their shared cultural backdrop, Cindy Patton, Stuart Marshall, Judith Mayne, Richard Fung, Kobena Mercer, and Teresa de Lauretis take on pornography, history, sexual roles and behavior, authorship, safe sex, the representation of desire, and feminist film theory—and these writers aren't afraid to admit their own confusions and uncertainties about the issues. Impressive in this regard is Kobena Mercer's

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"Skin Head Sex Thing: Racial Difference and the Homoerotic Imaginary." Partially revising (a "180-degree turn") his earlier critique of Mapplethorpe's work as objectifying black men by insisting upon a white male subject position for spectators, Mercer wonders "whether the anger in that earlier reading was not also the expression and projection of a certain envy" of Mapplethorpe as a rival for "the same unattainable object of desire, depicted and represented in the visual field of the other." But while he now recognizes a degree of "subversive deconstruction" in the ironic "ambivalence" of Mapplethorpe's work, Mercer admits he "still can't make up his mind about Mapplethorpe," so he offers his own ambivalent rereading of Mapplethorpe's photos of black men by considering how his current critical position has been influenced by certain considerations of biography (his own and Mapplethorpe's) and culture (the tradition of high-art nudes, the suppression of gay erotic representations in public spaces).

Beyond Mercer's essay, it is heartening to see a number of essays (re)considering how and where the cultural autobiographies of spectators/consumers and the cultural biographies of "authors" might fruitfully come into discussions of queerness and/in film and mass culture. It has always struck me as a strange coincidence that authors died and criticism containing autobiographical elements became gauche just about the time lesbians (and women in general), gays, and people of color were again becoming more visible and vocal about their lives, their histories, and their cultures. Along with Mercer's piece, Richard Fung's "Looking for My Penis: The Eroticized Asian in Gay Video Porn," Teresa de Lauretis's "Film and the Visible," and Judith Mayne's "Lesbian Looks: Dorothy Arzner and Female Authorship" suggest that how we look as queers might depend upon acknowledging who we are as specific queer spectators/consumers, as well as upon asking ourselves how knowing that an "author" is queer might make a difference.

Mayne and de Lauretis also have some refreshingly blunt comments about the heterocentrism and homophobia of most film theory and criticism, particularly certain feminist theories. Concerning the rediscovery of Dorothy Arzner and her films, Mayne comments: "One begins to suspect that the simultaneous evocation and dispelling of an erotic bond between women in Arzner's work is the structuring absence in feminist film theory. . . . why [are] feminist film theorists . . . so drawn to the dykey image [of Arzner] yet so reluctant to utter the word *lesbian.*" In a sweeping critique of earlier feminist work on masquerade, transvestism, and cross-dressing as fundamentally heterosexual in their conception of gender, de Lauretis cites Sue-Ellen Case's work on camp and lesbian culture as a better theoretical basis for examining the particularly queer dimensions of lesbian style, sexual roles, representation, and spectatorship. Along these lines, de Lauretis finds *She Must Be Seeing Things* (the central text examined in her essay) an exciting film because it attempts to mark off "the representation of [lesbian] desire heterosexually conceived" through its "effort to represent a homosexual-lesbian desire." That is, for de Lauretis *She Must Be Seeing Things* becomes a search for queer desire, representation, and spectatorship as distinct from lesbianism (or gayness) expressed from within, or in relation to, various straight paradigms.

And this drive to articulate a range of distinct and distinctive lesbian and gay positions informs much of the work in this valuable anthology. But ultimately the queerness of *How Do I Look?* resides not so much in its individual articles as in its overall atmosphere of gays and lesbians (writers, audiences, and readers) addressing each other in order to create a space which is inclusive, which can contain theory and practice by academics, film-/video-makers, and political activists; and where race, gender, class, and sexuality are not given the "mantra" treatment, but become part of every issue. There is one exception to this sense of queer inclusivity, however: bisexuality (in theory or in practice) seems to get a bum rap, either by exclusion/invisibility or through openly hostile comments. (Cindy Patton has the nicest thing to say about bisexuality when she calls bisexuals a "community" in her discussion of safe-sex activism.) In an anthology that otherwise seems so poly- and multi- everything else, this bisexual blindness (or bashing) seems not very queer-spirited.

ALEXANDER DOTY

▪ Alexander Doty teaches at Lehigh University.

Images of Postmodern Society
Social Theory and Contemporary Cinema

By Norman K. Denzin. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, 1991. $49.95 cloth; $19.95 paper.

This book is as much an introduction to postmodern critical theory from a sociologist's perspective as it is an examination of the cinema's reflection of postmodernity. In the first 50 pages of this book the author offers a dense but accessible survey of the theoretical terrain staked out by a wide variety of scholars, principally Baudrillard, Jameson, and Lyotard. The survey is well-trod ground, but it is more useful pedagogically than similar attempts to cover this vast arena of ideas. The difficulty is that the survey seems excessive, not really serving the purpose of film analysis, since the book's essential premise—that we live in a very mediated society whose consciousness has been shaped by cinema—is established early on and derives from Robert Sklar more than Baudrillard et al.

Norman Denzin's tone at first seems moralistic. He wants the reader to see beyond the ivory-tower solipism of much postmodern theory and take a lesson from C. Wright Mills, who, for the author, outlined the real problems of postmodern civilization in his *Sociological Imagination* more than 30 years ago. For Denzin, Mills' appreciation of the "power elite" and an increasingly stratified class society obviated much of the complex contemporary debate about the hyperalienating consequences of postmodernity. Mills is for Denzin more concerned with the nitty-gritty; the author is disturbed that critical theorists today focus on hyperreality and the problems of simulation and the mediascape rather than racism, sexism, AIDS, and social and economic injustice in all manifestations. But then Denzin becomes something of a postmodernist himself as he criticizes Mills for his totalizations and his failure to comprehend fully the effects of media and the cybernetic revolution on society.

Denzin's analyses of *Blue Velvet; Wall Street; Crimes and Misdemeanors; sex, lies, and videotape; When Harry Met Sally;* and *Do The Right Thing* are more concerned with describing phases of postmodern anomie, which he associates with the late capitalism of the Reagan/Thatcher era, than with understanding how changes in narrative style might suggest transformations in the self and in society. Only in his discussion of David Lynch does Denzin pay attention to the full range of complexity offered by postmodern art. In *Blue Velvet*, Denzin sees the pastiche and cult of nostalgia outlined by Jameson, as well as the impossibility of social and critical consensus suggested by the film's familiar yet oblique and bizarre narrative style. Part of Denzin's analytical strategy is the incorporation of contemporary movie reviews into his own accounts of films. The author notes that *Blue Velvet* was embraced by a religious newspaper for its strong sense of objective good and evil, while simultaneously being excoriated by elements of the mainstream press for its debauchery and nihilism. The inability of society to read its artistic texts with any kind of consistency is for Denzin one emblem of postmodernity.

In many respects, the author's choice of films is troublesome; while most of them may seem to reflect the ethical dilemmas of late capitalist, postmodern society, most don't have the stylistic dimensions of recognizably postmodern works such as Alex Cox's *Repo Man* or Nicholas Roeg's *Insignificance.* And although Denzin's discussion of the replacement of social intercourse by mediation in *sex, lies, and videotape* is cogent, he seems to miss the conventional melodrama of *Wall Street.* His analysis of this film is contradictory and at times awkward. Denzin says Oliver Stone "refuses to touch" the metaphor of Wall Street as a purely imaginary, Baudrillardian ideological site, but on the next page he claims "this is the frightening world *Wall Street* refers to and this is the world Stone pretended to open up in his movie." The problem here is not so much the intentional fallacy as the author's opaque reasoning. If the film refers to this world, in what sense does it not "open it up?" If it doesn't "open up" such questions, why is it a representative postmodern work? The chapter abruptly ends on the point.

The book becomes increasingly aphoristic, with the author setting a number of films (such as Wenders' *Paris, Texas*) against the comments of Baudrillard in the thinnest (and most off-the-mark) of his books, *America.* The author's uninterest in film analysis as such becomes clearer as the book concludes with meditations on voyeurism and the (rather tired) notion of the contemporary subject as voyeur. For a sociologist, and a rather moralistic one at that, Denzin takes a surprising turn in his conclusion by suggesting that we focus on the small, discrete problem/narrative rather than the master concepts of social theory, which he views, C. Wright Mills included, as remote and authoritarian.

The book is often frustrating for the film scholar, since some analyses feel incomplete or are crowded off the page by needless references to journalistic reviewers or social theorists (the book is more than amply referenced). Its usefulness may be its generally succinct capsulizations of postmodern theory, making it a kind of reference book to the current critical scene.

CHRISTOPHER SHARRETT

▪ Christopher Sharrett teaches at Seton Hall University.

In a Lonely Street
Film Noir, Genre, Masculinity

By Frank Krutnik. New York: Routledge, Chapman and Hall, 1991. $49.95 cloth; $15.95 paper.

Few types of film narrative have drawn as much commentary in recent years as the film noir. That response is partly due to the resurgence of films squarely in the noir tradition—a resurgence that has begged the question of whether or not noir constitutes a genre and has also emphasized how much this form, with its desperate characters, bared desires, and closed possibilities, speaks to current cultural circumstances. Perhaps that response also testifies to the way these dark films with their veiled narrative styles have profitably opened up to our contemporary critical approaches.

Frank Krutnik's *In a Lonely Street* follows in a long line of critical efforts in demonstrating how effective a feminist critique can be for exploring this critical terrain. As far back as *Film Comment*'s special noir issue, through E. Ann Kaplan's *Women in Film Noir* anthology, to the many recent takes on this form's sexual dynamics, the problematic male and threatening female figures have proven the central thematic touchstones for most discussions of noir. While it omits mention of some of this prior work—most notably Mitchell Cohen and Stephen Farber's formulations of the masculine "victim" and feminine "bitch goddess" of noir—Krutnik's book draws on this body of material to offer its own thesis: that the film noir is a form symptomatic of and responsive to a troubled sense of masculinity in 1940s America. If this point seems a bit commonplace by now, *In a Lonely Street* still does an admirable job of representing or summing up much of that feminist-inspired discourse about film noir.

In support of his thesis, Krutnik undertakes to sort out the field, that is, to discriminate between the various types of noir. Certainly, one of the great problems we face in studying this form is the sheer number of films that, because of their visual style, similar themes, or a generic affinity (for example, all detective or thriller films), tend to be lumped within the noir canon. By focusing solely on a group of films that foreground a problematic masculinity, on what he terms the "tough thriller," Krutnik manages to bracket off many works from that unwieldly canon and to concentrate on the variety of efforts—both successful and unsuccessful—in films of the 1940s at recuperating a troubled masculine image. While his grouping of major noirs into the categories of "tough investigative thriller," "tough suspense thriller," and "criminal-adventure thriller" seems open to question (due to a measure of overlapping within these groups), it is at least the *type* of move that can help us both to sort out what has often seemed to be one of the most frustratingly amorphous groups of films as well as to better understand what many of them reveal about our culture in this period.

At the base of this effort at organization is Krutnik's initial concern with outlining "a viable generic framework for the study of the noir phenomenon." Drawing primarily on the genre work of Steven Neale and, to a lesser extent, on the semiotics of Christian Metz, he suggests that we see noir as a pattern of "orientations, expectations and conventions" peculiar to 1940s Hollywood cinema. Within that pattern, he sees a series of "complex stylistic transformations" going on, which the various thriller modes he has identified serve to illustrate.

While this approach may be useful for better situating these films within the cultural landscape of 1940s America, it is rather less successful at addressing their generic status, that is, at resolving the question of whether or not the film noir constitutes a genre of its own. The problem lies in both the exclusive and inclusive moves Krutnik makes. For while he discounts the familiar notion that noir is simply a movement or "cycle within the broader genre of the crime film," that stance seems weakened when he simply marginalizes—or consigns to an afterthought appendix discussion—many similar crime films of the era, works most often seen as part of the noir canon. He also considers only films of the 1940s; those of the 1950s, he asserts, "are beyond the boundaries of the present study." Because of this narrow focus, the book not only loses one of the stronger arguments for noir's generic status—that a particular formula can adapt through time to changing cultural conditions and continue to speak meaningfully to an audience—but it also limits how we see these

The book is often frustrating for the film scholar, since some analyses feel incomplete or are crowded off the page by needless references to journalistic reviewers or social theorists (the book is more than amply referenced). Its usefulness may be its generally succinct capsulizations of postmodern theory, making it a kind of reference book to the current critical scene.

CHRISTOPHER SHARRETT

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In a Lonely Street
Film Noir, Genre, Masculinity

By Frank Krutnik. New York: Routledge, Chapman and Hall, 1991. $49.95 cloth; $15.95 paper.

Few types of film narrative have drawn as much commentary in recent years as the film noir. That response is partly due to the resurgence of films squarely in the noir tradition—a resurgence that has begged the question of whether or not noir constitutes a genre and has also emphasized how much this form, with its desperate characters, bared desires, and closed possibilities, speaks to current cultural circumstances. Perhaps that response also testifies to the way these dark films with their veiled narrative styles have profitably opened up to our contemporary critical approaches.

Frank Krutnik's *In a Lonely Street* follows in a long line of critical efforts in demonstrating how effective a feminist critique can be for exploring this critical terrain. As far back as *Film Comment*'s special noir issue, through E. Ann Kaplan's *Women in Film Noir* anthology, to the many recent takes on this form's sexual dynamics, the problematic male and threatening female figures have proven the central thematic touchstones for most discussions of noir. While it omits mention of some of this prior work—most notably Mitchell Cohen and Stephen Farber's formulations of the masculine "victim" and feminine "bitch goddess" of noir—Krutnik's book draws on this body of material to offer its own thesis: that the film noir is a form symptomatic of and responsive to a troubled sense of masculinity in 1940s America. If this point seems a bit commonplace by now, *In a Lonely Street* still does an admirable job of representing or summing up much of that feminist-inspired discourse about film noir.

In support of his thesis, Krutnik undertakes to sort out the field, that is, to discriminate between the various types of noir. Certainly, one of the great problems we face in studying this form is the sheer number of films that, because of their visual style, similar themes, or a generic affinity (for example, all detective or thriller films), tend to be lumped within the noir canon. By focusing solely on a group of films that foreground a problematic masculinity, on what he terms the "tough thriller," Krutnik manages to bracket off many works from that unwieldly canon and to concentrate on the variety of efforts—both successful and unsuccessful—in films of the 1940s at recuperating a troubled masculine image. While his grouping of major noirs into the categories of "tough investigative thriller," "tough suspense thriller," and "criminal-adventure thriller" seems open to question (due to a measure of overlapping within these groups), it is at least the *type* of move that can help us both to sort out what has often seemed to be one of the most frustratingly amorphous groups of films as well as to better understand what many of them reveal about our culture in this period.

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films in terms of our own changing circumstances. Part of the difficulty seems to be the very *un*dynamic definition of genre used here, the notion that "Genre represents a system of standardized variation at the level of narrative." This sort of formulation has the appeal of simplicity; however, it also subtly renders genre ahistorical and drains it of meaning. In fact, it could just as easily be used to describe all Hollywood film-making in the studio era.

Still, this book's real value does not lie in its efforts at sorting out the "is-it-or-isn't-it-a-genre" issue. In fact, the virtual disappearance of that question from later chapters seems to allow that the book has been going through a kind of obligatory motion in addressing the genre question while its true aim is elsewhere. It situates itself as paradigmatic of a key line of feminist inquiry, that which explores not the image or status of woman in a patriarchal culture, but rather the broader consequences of the feminine's absence or exclusion "from the regime of the masculine." *In a Lonely Street* seems a model of this sort of approach—and one that produces some of the better readings of films of this era.

In his effort to trace out how the 1940s "tough" thrillers "are marked by, and seek to reorder, disruptions to and schisms in masculine identity," Krutnik ranges over many of the most familiar noir titles, among them *The Maltese Falcon, Double Indemnity, Dead Reckoning, Out of the Past,* and *Pitfall.* Since he is dealing with a by-now familiar thesis about problematic masculinity and with films that are among the most discussed in the American cinema, a few of the commentaries strike a predictable note, as in the case of *The Maltese Falcon.* Krutnik's conclusion that Bogart's Sam Spade is "an embodiment of self-sufficient phallic potency" simply tricks out the obvious in Freudian terms. Yet such discussions are more than balanced by a number of finely observed, well-detailed, and compelling analyses. Perhaps the best of these is the treatment of *Out of the Past,* which outlines the film's concern with the loss and reassertion of identity in a postwar world that has undermined many of the traditional bases for masculine identity. The number of such readings—and I might also mention that of the too seldom discussed *Dead Reckoning*—is one of *In a Lonely Street*'s great strengths.

Despite my appreciation for several of these analyses, I was not convinced that the film noir is essentially a genre about masculine identity. It would, after all, be easy to reverse both the approach and the focus here. By relegating most of the works discussed here to variations on the detective genre and looking in detail at such films as *Christmas Holiday, The Dark Mirror, The File on Thelma Jordan, Fallen Angel, Laura,* and *Lady from Shanghai* (among many others), we could see this form as preoccupied with a problematic feminine identity. That possibility suggests that we might draw the circle rather larger, seeing all of these explorations of our phantom identity as part of a generic effort at confronting a broader elusiveness. For the film noir finally seems more an effort to explore why *all* of our traditional formulations—and cinematic formulas—seemed to have lost so much of their substance and authority.

Krutnik's exploration of these symptoms from a narrower vantage, though, has its own value, particularly for those interested in the range of applications of a feminist critical model, as well as for those interested in updating and fleshing out the cultural portrait broadly sketched by works such as Barbara Deming's *Running Away from Myself* and Jack Shadoian's *Dreams and Dead Ends. In a Lonely Street* well sums up a particular approach to the film noir, an approach that has been articulated in a variety of articles, anthologies, and book-length studies over the past decade. Moreover, it offers a consistently intelligent and at times provocative discussion of several of these films in light of the shifting cultural dynamics of 1940s America.

J. P. TELOTTE

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Indonesian Cinema

By Karl Heider. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1991. $28.00 cloth; $9.95 paper.

At approximately 187 million people, the population of Indonesia is about the same as that of France, Germany, and Great Britain combined; its population exceeds that of Japan by over 60 million people. Yet what most film scholars know of Indonesian cinema (let alone Indonesia as a whole) would not fill up a 3 x 5 index card. Indonesia, like India and the Philippines, achieved its independence from colonial powers shortly after the Second World War and has, like India especially, used the cinema as part of the process of unifying diverse ethnic and cultural groups within its boundaries and to aid the process of modernization. Karl Heider's book-length study is the first

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sustained attempt in English to provide an overview of Indonesian cinema by introducing us to a range of contemporary popular Indonesian film while sketching in a solid foreground of Indonesian culture. Heider, an anthropologist by training and an expert on ethnographic film-making, presents his analysis as a cultural reading of Indonesian cinema. To appreciate Indonesian films one must know something of the cultural terrain from which they emerge. Thus he explains Indonesian culture in terms of group orientation and the search for and maintenance of order as a prime cultural value. He makes an important point about the strong regional and ethnic cultures which make up Indonesia (Java and Sumatra, for instance, are part of the complex archipelago) and thus raises the question of a kind of deliberate imposition of a centralized national culture (Indonesian) overlaying a host of regional, ethnic, and linguistic cultures (which cannot reasonably be called subcultures). He sketches in the generic nature of Indonesian films, naming and briefly defining various genres, basic character types, and plot conventions, while also focusing on the issues of modernization vs. tradition and Indonesian vs. Western which seem inextricably linked in the popular imagination of this non-fundamentalist Moslem nation.

Yet unfortunately the approach Heider takes will likely do little to change the situation with regard to the availability of Indonesian cinema in the English-speaking film world, for he makes no compelling case for Indonesian cinema as cinema. That is to say that if one is generally interested in world cinema one might (and should) read this book to fill in a gap in one's knowledge. If one is particularly interested in Asian cinemas then this book is must reading to continue to sketch in the picture of film production in Asian countries besides India, Japan, and China. But the qualities of Indonesian film-making as a (possibly) unique expression of the art and craft of the cinema, or the cinema put to culturally and aesthetically specific ends, remain underexplored. I am left wondering: if I should have the opportunity to see Indonesian films (and Heider seems to indicate that my only chance might be to go to his home in Columbia, South Carolina, and choose titles from his shelf of videos—he has nothing here about the availability of Indonesian films in the U.S. in any format), what exactly will I discover beyond an expression of Indonesian culture on film/video? Noël Burch, for instance, in *To the Distant Observer*, made the case that Japanese films offered an alternative model of cinematic construction to the dominant Hollywood style. Thus, whether he was right or wrong, polemical or reductive, Burch commanded, even compelled, our attention to the Japanese cinema. It may be that Indonesian cinema has few of these alternative qualities of film style and storytelling techniques. But Heider too little addresses this larger cinematic issue. He is, in fact, completely unconcerned with aesthetics, or, better, polemics, giving no sense of Indonesian films as cinematically particular texts. Indeed he seems uninterested or unable to handle filmic issues at all—his chapter on narrative conventions, for instance, does not focus on narrative style or practice at all, and so is misnamed. Despite his protestation that "a close cinematographic reading of Indonesian films" may eventually be forthcoming, while his is "a cultural analysis," one naturally has a right to expect some sense of the cinema in a book about film.

Thus for all his knowledge of a subject vastly in need of explication, Heider fails to compel our interest in Indonesian cinema on another level as well: sheer enjoyment. Although he distinguishes the generic canon of films he is examining from "author" films of Indonesian directors, most film cultures offer us many joys of and within genre: a *Bringing Up Baby*, or a *Meet Me in St. Louis;* a *Sword of Doom* or the "Baby Cart" series of Japanese Samurai films; or the transcendental glories of the Shaw Bros. martial arts films once churned out weekly in the heyday of the Hong Kong cinema. Heider's deft reading of Indonesian culture's impact on its cinema will enable me to understand the films I may see, but will I love them? Does he love them? If so, it goes unmentioned. Can *Buaya Putih* (The White Crocodile), the story of two generations of werecrocodiles, really be so simply passed over as a mere exemplar of basic Indonesian cultural traits on film? Dispassionate analysis of a passionate medium may be academically justifiable, but it doesn't help command our interest in a virtually unknown national cinema.

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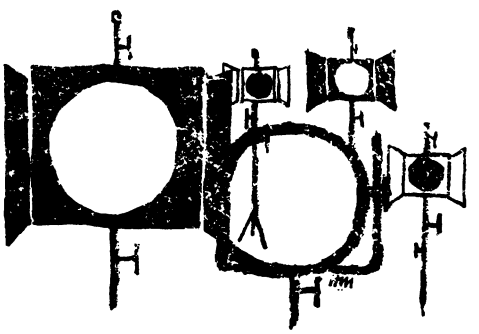

Inventing Vietnam
The War in Film and Television

Edited by Michael Anderegg. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1991. $49.95 cloth; $16.95 paper.

This anthology follows on the heels of other anthologies on Vietnam and culture that at least stress film, some with more seasoned contributors, such as *From Hanoi to Hollywood: The Vietnam War in American Film* (edited by Linda Dittmar and Gene Michaud, Rutgers University Press) and *The Vietnam War and American Culture* (edited by John Carlos Rowe and Rick Berg, Columbia University Press). It also follows Susan Jeffords' thoughtful monograph *The Remasculinization of America: Gender and the Vietnam War* (Indiana University Press). Anderegg's anthology may have its strongest value in alerting academics to approaches in current research, although it may not inspire them.

The 14 disparate contributions were not, apparently, written around a common objective. They do share an unarticulated approach—roughly a literary-criticism-derived one that teases implications out of narrative and dialogue. They mostly share an also unarticulated understanding of the relevant data, which is big-name, fictional industry productions with a centrist or liberal perspective from 1978–80 and 1985–89. In terms of time, the film *Casualties of War* would seem the outer limits of the publishing schedule; it is barely touched on. In terms of ideology, right-wing films hold little interest as such for most of these writers, a major exception being Tony Williams (who sees them as an instrument for "conservative ideological forces" to "regroup").

Even so, the authors do not overlap much in their subject matter, which tends to be a discrete facet or two of the phenomenon—Oliver Stone's films; *Tour of Duty; Rambo*. Two intriguing exceptions are David Desser's impressive survey of images of Vietnamese in recent films and the editor's comparison of John Wayne and Jane Fonda's celebrity status in relation to the war.

The question of whether the "Vietnam film" is a genre, and if so in what it consists, is addressed by some authors and not by others. Two writers venture beyond subject matter alone to find Vietnamese themes. Cynthia Fuchs argues that *Taxi Driver* is actually about the "unrepresentability" of the war, although this point appears more posited than demonstrated. Ellen Draper argues that action films better express how "the displaced trauma of Vietnam recurs as the failure of American culture" than do Vietnam films. This argument rests, however, on her prior equation of Vietnam with "the collapse of American culture on every level." (Curiously, with the exception of one sentence in the whole anthology, there is no discussion of covert "Vietnam films" such as the war-era *Soldier Blue* and *Little Big Man*.)

The style of most essays hovers midway between the obscurantism of some theoretical film journals and the lucidity and breadth of, say, J. Hoberman's brilliant "Vietnam: The Remake" in Barbara Kruger and Phil Mariani's *Remaking History* (Seattle: Bay Press). An attentive editor might have flagged sentences like "*Platoon* (1986) illustrates Bakhtin's recognition of [the bildungsroman's] antihistorical tendences" (118) and "[Travis Bickle's] radical decentering into violence begins with his attempt to derail his 'morbid self-attention' through association with the self-threatening Other, named and mastered, as it was in Vietnam, through the mythology of mission" (39). (And maybe it's time for personal computer spellcheckers to include counts with alarm systems on words such as "rigorous," "trope," "diagetic," and "representation.")

Thomas Slater's essay on teaching Vietnam films is invigorating for several reasons. Virtually alone in the volume, he considers film as more than a story line and set of characters, asking questions about, for instance, editing and camera perspective. He makes historical comparisons between films on similar subjects. He clearly has investigated the production context of the films he uses (and indeed has invited producers into his class).

Many of the essays by contrast suffer from a kind of textual tunnel vision, which they share with much academic writing on popular culture. This is doubly unfortunate because it is so unnecessary. Current and recent popular films offer a rich variety of data for critics and analysts far beyond the text itself, including newspaper and magazine articles, especially in trade magazines, often superbly indexed; film-makers, who are often available for at least a phone interview; sociological and historical analysis of related issues; and memories and attitudes of university students who viewed and review the films. With these resources and others it is possible to go beyond speculation when, for instance, one wants to know why the industry suddenly began bankrolling Vietnam films or whether other social groups share white liberals' critiques of Rambo. Carolyn Reed Vartanian's essay on "China Beach"

uses production information well to bolster her argument that the TV show constructed the Vietnam vet as a traditional hero.

Students and beginning researchers will be helped by the selective bibliography and the nicely annotated filmography, although each person who has read in this area will quibble with choices. In the bibliography, I miss Hoberman's aforementioned article. (I have also written an article, "Good Soldiers," on Vietnam films in Mark Crispin Miller's *Seeing through Movies* [Pantheon, 1990], but it may have come out too late for inclusion.) In the filmography at least seven apparently relevant films, including *Dear America, Heartbreak Ridge,* and *Bat 21* are not listed.

PAT AUFDERHEIDE

▪ Pat Aufderheide teaches at American University and is a senior editor of *In These Times.*

Method Actors
Three Generations of an American Acting Style

By Steve Vineberg. New York: Schirmer Books, 1991. $24.95.

Method acting is usually thought of as an actor's reaching into him- or herself for the emotions to play a scene, and what leaps to mind when one thinks of it are the performances of two or three actors (Brando, Clift, Dean) in a dozen or so films of the 1950s. Steve Vineberg's book reminds us that there was and is much more to "the Method" than that. He credits its influence with an ongoing move toward realism in our acting, and he makes a good case for this.

It's a mark of the Method's impact to recall that after all these years it is still controversial. It was a target for parody almost as soon as, direct from New York, it hit Hollywood's shores; from Sid Caesar's "Montgomery Bugle" clear through to *Barton Fink,* it's still an easy target. Critical schools of the past 30 years have had little use for it—auteurist critics prefer screen icons like John Wayne to "theatrical" performers like Marlon Brando, and a modern scholar of gender like Richard Dyer finds a sexual bias in its claim to authenticity. But it has always had its fans. The best performances in the Method tradition, male and female alike, are as fresh and affecting as when they were given. Steve Vineberg's exhaustive viewing of films famous and obscure, and of kinescopes which go back to the dawn of television, calls our attention to many of them.

Vineberg provides a readable gloss of the history of an important branch (some would say *the* important branch) of American acting history, from the 1930s through the 1980s. He traces the Method's roots to Stanislavsky and the Moscow Art Theatre, usefully defines such controversial terms as "affective memory," and locates its first flowering in America, the Group Theatre, amid the militant idealism of the 1930s. Unfortunately, his condescending attitude toward that idealism lets him muff the Group's political background; he calls his chapter on Clifford Odets et al. "Passionate Moderates"—a misreading, I think, of their values. The ascendency some dozen years later of Method players in Hollywood at the same time that its originators were either being blacklisted or cooperating, like Kazan, with anti-Communist authority has been read by some commentators (Peter Biskind comes to mind) as part of a cultural move from ideology to psychology demanded by the Cold War. There's none of that here. Vineberg seems completely unaware of post-1960 critical approaches to mass entertainment, choosing instead to quote such period stalwarts as Robert Warshow and Mary McCarthy.

At the heart of the book lie Vineberg's prose recreations of Method performances, hundreds of pages of detailed commentary on Method, Method-inflected, or at least arguably Method-like performances. He manages to work in a section on some 1930s actors—Robinson, Stanwyck—he likes, plus a whole chapter on Jason Robards toward the end, which is reaching for it, since Robards is not Method-trained. Vineberg also all but ignores and dismisses the work of John Cassavetes, which owes at least as much to Method notions of acting as Robards'. Virtually everyone associated with the Method is included, although Eli Wallach, Shelley Winters, and Robert De Niro are missing in action. A throughline is traced from early landmarks of Method acting like Lee J. Cobb's performance in *Death of a Salesman* to Dustin Hoffman's Willy Loman of 1984. The sections on Clift, Brando, Newman ("the great proletarian Method actor"), and Hoffman are particularly strong.

Vineberg opens his book with a brilliant comparison of Rod Steiger's kinescope "Marty" of 1953 and Ernest Borgnine's non-Method, more obvious screen "Marty" of two years later. On the level of detailed observation—of little hand movements, eye twitches, how an actor uses his or her body—Vineberg is consistently perceptive, frequently insightful, and not a little

uses production information well to bolster her argument that the TV show constructed the Vietnam vet as a traditional hero.

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Vineberg opens his book with a brilliant comparison of Rod Steiger's kinescope "Marty" of 1953 and Ernest Borgnine's non-Method, more obvious screen "Marty" of two years later. On the level of detailed observation—of little hand movements, eye twitches, how an actor uses his or her body—Vineberg is consistently perceptive, frequently insightful, and not a little

overwhelming. Like Pauline Kael, whose tastes and prose style he frequently emulates, he is at his best when dealing with the immediacy of the acting moment. His discussion of the forgotten Roman Bohnen's performance in *Of Mice and Men* is a revelation. On the other hand, 300 pages of showy prose style is a bit much, and there is an additional problem: like the people he writes about, Vineberg is sometimes guilty of showing off for its own sweet sake. What dreadful thing did Geraldine Page ever do to deserve slurs like "the puffiest apple cheeks in show business" and "shoot the poor crazy bitch"? Kim Stanley and Sandy Dennis are equally abused. Vineberg does find room to praise such neglected female players as Julie Harris, Eva Marie Saint, Kim Hunter, and Blythe Danner, but Dyer's comments on the sexism of the Method's advocates still comes irresistibly to mind.

There are other problems: careful attention to camera, editing, lighting is largely absent from *Method Actors*, even though such key directors as Elia Kazan and Martin Ritt, central to the careers of such Method stars as Marlon Brando and Paul Newman respectively, taught at the Actor's Studio. We learn of Kazan's brief acting career, and he's frequently quoted. But crucial questions of how Method acting came to be transferred to Hollywood cinema go by the board. To take the less well-known Ritt as an example, I didn't learn that he had a Method background from Vineberg's work. All *Method Actors* says is that the part of "Marty" was written for him, but that Ritt couldn't create the role on television because he was blacklisted. Also, that Ritt directed Newman in *Hud* ("expertly") and Rip Torn in *Cross Creek*, period. Vineberg admires these performances; of how Ritt's Method background might have helped him work with or even shape Newman and Torn's performances he gives no clue.

Vineberg tends to read Method actors as auteurs, autonomous creators of their stage and screen performances, and his showboat prose style and single-focus attack are, ultimately, more exhausting than exhaustive. Still, this is a useful book on an important subject, and if it sends more of us back to original films and kinescopes (and to the theater itself) its enterprise will be justified.

GREGG RICKMAN

▪ Gregg Rickman is completing his latest book, *Variable Man: The Lives of Philip K. Dick.*

The Movie That Changed My Life

Edited by David Rosenberg. New York: Viking Press, 1991. $21.95.

Compared with the thickets of reception theory and a deal of heavy speculation about constructing subjectivitity at the Bijou, relatively few serious inquiries have been undertaken into filmic responses of real, live subjects. David Rosenberg—translator/co-author of *The Book of J*—recently asked 23 novelists, literary critics, and fellow poets to comment upon a seminal picture whose influence, in most cases, was keenly felt during childhood or adolescence. His added proviso: whenever possible, "the movie that changed my life" would be re-viewed to assess its current power to move. The results are consistently provocative, although the brief space permitted by the project often frustrates. Only a few essays seem unworthy of their better company.

Rosenberg intends his book to "honor the act of discovery." In this vein, many participants do marvelously summon up (sometimes to wistfully deconstruct) the unguarded freshness of the silver screen's impact upon a youthful *mentalité*. One is impressed by the wide range of uses to which favored films could be put for good, for ill, or for ambiguous purpose (intriguingly, the same film often served several agendas). Movies negligible or famous furnished escape from harsh reality, but also could offer a spur for genuine, positive change both within the self and the wider world. Thus, *The Wizard of Oz* tutored Terry McMillan in the art of coping with her impoverished childhood, particularly in standing up to her hardworking, tough-minded mother.

Philip Lopate muses on the distressing possibility that cinema might provide a *cordon sanitaire* for creative or spiritual aspirations far better fulfilled outside the Bijou. He suspects a yearning to recuperate his Jewish heritage (still unresolved) may have been diverted by too comfortable a meditation on the possibilities for the hero's redemption in Bresson's transcendental cinema, rather than on the condition of his own soul.

On the unambiguous dark side, much firsthand testimony fleshes out familiar cultural theory on how potently questionable notions about sex, class, race can be purveyed to unquestioning minds under the guise of harmless entertainment. Seeing *Bambi* as an adult, Russell Banks awakens to its Victorian distortions about gender. A dismayed Francine Prose now finds

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Assorted other pleasures:

Meg Wolitzer and Bharati Mukherjee on how two adolescent girls from disparate cultures were, respectively, comforted by *Shadow of a Doubt* and *Love Me or Leave Me*. Mukherjee, daughter of a wealthy Calcutta family, says she "Bengalized" Ruth Etting's story with wonderful ease. Her *aperçu* felicitously captures the universal process of cutting foreign custom and environs to the individual psyche's fit.

Leonard Michaels on the zipper as erotic trope in *Gilda*; on the obscure *frisson* compelled by the conflation of Hayworth's undomesticable sexuality and her grinding humiliations throughout that film.

Amy Hempel on the thesis that a privileged movie may initiate change by ineluctably *defining* one life phase or another, engendering an intense awareness of where one has gotten to, through identification with character and/or mise-en-scène.

Gordon Lish, on the quite extraordinary—and eerily uncomfortable—intimation that the actors in a pornographic film might be watching *him* from inside its frame.

As previously noted, such recognitions are attractive, but singularly frustrating because they cannot be overmuch developed. To the psychoanalyst, *The Movie That Changed My Mind* suggests a far more ambitious project, on the order of Norman Holland's *Five Readers Reading*. Imagine a large cohort of viewers, life histories explored in depth, shown the same film (or films, perhaps of several different genres), free associations duly recorded, the tools of my trade then deployed to probe and truly grasp the complex articulations between the movie on the screen, and—paraphrasing William Carlos Williams—the poem we have been trying to become all our lives.

One notes with a special pang how often the memory of a movie treasured by Rosenberg's subjects was bound up with the ambience of the theater—now long gone—in which the picture was first seen: *Z* at the Gilles in Wahpeton, North Dakota, for Louise Erdrich; *Gone With the Wind* at the Breeze in Beaufort, South Carolina, for Valerie Sayers. She saw *GWTW* from the beginning—unlike most other films of the day, which were likely to be entered *in media res*, and similarly concluded. The practice required a cockeyed narratological suppleness, so routine it was never questioned when I walked through the Art Deco doors of the Renel Theater during my own Philadelphia childhood. Years from now, recalling the delights of *Thelma & Louise*, who is likely to brim with such nostalgia for the barren box of the Loews 84th Street sixplex?

HARVEY R. GREENBERG

▪ Harvey R. Greenberg is Clinical Professor of Psychiatry at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New York.

Reel Women
Pioneers of the Cinema 1896 to the Present

By Ally Acker. New York: Continuum, 1991. $34.95.

As a labor of love over the last eight years, through production of a documentary, public lectures, and now a reference book of film history, Ally Acker has been publicizing the oft-forgotten and/or ignored work of women pioneers within the film industry. In *Reel Women* she has brought together in one accessible place material previously available only by combing through diverse, frequently hard-to-obtain sources. Additionally, she has herself conducted numerous interviews with many of the women in question. As an opportunity for these "'pioneers' . . . who blazed trails . . . where . . . others[s] . . . had not gone before" (xx) to speak for themselves, *Reel Women* is exceptional, a major contribution to women's history generally as well as to the history of film-making in the United States.

Using the format of biographical/professional sketches followed by filmographies, *Reel Women* covers directors, producers, writers, animators, stunt women, women behind the scenes, and "one-of-a-kind reel women." Where appropriate, Acker divides her

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work into silent and sound eras; she touches on avant-garde film-makers, women of color, and a few "select foreign reel women." Individual sections of the book begin with short introductory essays and a generous grouping of black-and-white photographs.

Given the breadth of her coverage, it was impossible, as Acker acknowledges, to be comprehensive, and she expresses the hope "that someone will follow my lead and write a second volume" (xx). Although Acker announces a focus on feature film production and periodically talks about "the female gaze" as well as pioneer status, her principles of inclusion and exclusion remain unclear. This idiosyncratic approach is particularly problematic when it comes to her filmography and index. Why, for example, is Hitchcock indexed while Heckerling is not? That the filmographies sometimes do (but sometimes don't) include television work, or nonfeature work, or all of an artist's oeuvre, weakens the volume's reliability as a historical record. Careless writing and editing, including glaring grammatical errors and misspellings of names, also weaken its credibility.

Writing on Rita Moreno's late career move into film production, Acker comments, "Our interest . . . is in the *attitude*" (114) that her subjects express. Acker announces her own attitude in her introduction: "This is a book about the manipulation of history. About history as a fabrication and a lie" (xvii). For many people, the lack of scholarly objectivity—the presence, indeed, of proselytizing fervor—along with the lack of rigor in *Reel Women*'s scholarly apparatus will defeat Acker's purpose. Yet through her documentary, her lecture appearances, and the media response to her work, along with *Reel Women* itself, Acker has performed an invaluable service by bringing to general attention the contribution of an extraordinary group of women.

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▪ Harriet Margolis teaches at Oakland University in Rochester, Michigan.

Retrofitting *Blade Runner*

Issues in Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner* and Philip K. Dick's *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*

Edited by Judith B. Kerman. Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1991. $39.95 cloth; $19.95 paper.

The present and future significance of Ridley Scott's now decade-old science-fiction film *Blade Runner*, Judith B. Kerman argues, lies "far beyond the fascination of its special effects" (1). While the influence of this film within the motion picture industry has been enormous, resting largely upon its technical innovation and highly original futuristic design (the *Blade Runner* "look"), the 17 contributors represented in the 21 essays of this collection urge us to find the film's real importance elsewhere. The essays included in this book range over a variety of issues prompted by the film, examining, often compellingly, not only its rich textual sources, influences, allusions, and themes, but also what it reveals about both the problems of adaptation and of Hollywood's film production itself.

"Retrofitting," a term which the film's "Visual Futurist," Syd Mead, introduced into the popular vocabulary as a way of explaining the film's principle of visual design, is precisely what this book is trying to do with *Blade Runner*'s acquired reputation, that is, to retroactively attach to it meaning, significance, and value that originally went unrecognized in the immediate critical reception, and to argue for its fundamental importance and continued richness both as a Hollywood motion picture and as a "thought experiment." In effect, this amounts to a critical intervention intended to rescue the film from a perhaps undeserved neglect. It almost works.

Despite the book's titular claim and the ostensible aims of its contributors, a critical examination of the "issues" posed by Philip K. Dick's 1968 novel, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*, is decidedly lacking. Given the fact that Dick's reputation as one of the century's greatest writers is most certainly assured, and that he died only three months before the film's June 1982 release, the lack of such a potentially fruitful intertextual discourse is a regrettable omission. As a result, most of the essays focus on issues relevant to the compromised version of the film released in 1982.

Only Aaron Barlow's essay, "Philip K. Dick's Androids: Victimized Victimizers," is exclusively devoted to Dick's fiction, and provides the reader with a rudimentary yet useful examination of Dick's highly idiosyncratic conception of the "android." Yet, he mentions *Blade Runner* only in passing, and does not account for or explain the screenwriters' replacement of Dick's term with their own, "replicant." Of the

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essays, only William M. Kolb's discussion of the script's development ("Script to Screen: *Blade Runner* in Perspective") ever mentions why "android" was discarded and "replicant" instituted in its place; Scott, somewhat disingenuously, explained it as a "stylistic decision" intended to circumvent any possible preconception that "the film is about robots" (147). While the word "replicant," like the word "retrofitting," has entered the popular vocabulary as a result of this film's influence, the cognitive domain putatively engendered by the neologism "replicant" remains largely unexplored. The exception is Jack Boozer, Jr.'s, fine piece, "Crashing the Gates of Insight: *Blade Runner*." He argues that the replicants—"neither androids or cyborgs"—function as a "reality confusion" on the order of Jean Baudrillard's concept of "simulation" (217). He does not address the issue of the replicants being referred to as "skin jobs," however, unless he obliquely refers to it when discussing the replicants' "commodified status" (223). While Boozer presents a compelling argument for the film as a postmodern text, one wishes, finally, for an additional essay or two which would have examined Dick's source novel in such a fashion; both the film and the novel would have been enriched by such a juxtaposition. (Incidentally, neither "replicant" nor "skin job" as racial slurs exist in Dick's source novel.)

The other significant essay which discusses Dick's novel (only to finally dismiss it) is Brooks Landon's "'There's Some of Me in You': *Blade Runner* and the Adaptation of Science Fiction Literature into Film," which is primarily interested in using the film as a vehicle for developing a theory of "adaptation," and also in disempowering Dick's views on the screenplay(s). Even acknowledging the validity of Landon's argument that Dick was woefully naïve about the pragmatics of Hollywood's methods of adaptation, and even accepting his assertion that "Dick's perception of the relationship of his novel to the *Blade Runner* screenplay . . . should [not] be accorded privileged status beyond that of the opinion of any other informed and perceptive critic . . . " (94), the fact is that Dick's certainly nonprivileged reservations were largely corroborated by the critical discourse upon the film's release: *Blade Runner* was both a critical and commercial disappointment for reasons other than its thematic resonances, an issue which the authors represented here do not address. The book would have profited from such an interrogation.

What remains of Philip K. Dick himself is only Gregg Rickman's essay, "Philip K. Dick on *Blade Runner*: 'They Did Sight Stimulation on My Brain,' " which consists in large part of interviews with Dick. This essay raises the issues of adaptation in such a way that gives Dick's reservations about the adaptation itself some voice. As the essay reveals, Dick's reservations about the script(s) were largely formal and not substantial, that is, he was concerned with the *Blade Runner* story *as* story, and not with its thematic resonances (about which he seemed amenable, even given the fact that he never saw the released version). According to Rickman, Dick referred to an early draft of *Blade Runner*, entitled *Dangerous Days*, as "an 'eat lead, robot!' screenplay" and faulted its "over-reliance" on "the cliché-ridden Chandleresque figure . . . with a hoary voice-over" (103–4). Dick thus emerges as an informed and perceptive critic of, at least, the (1982) released version. Interestingly enough, some of the essayists in the book praise *Blade Runner* precisely *for* its use of these "hard-boiled" detective elements and its incorporation of detective genre motifs into a science-fiction setting. All of this critical discussion tends, inadvertently, to substantiate Kerman's ostensible claim that the film's reputation outside the industry cannot be established solely on aesthetic grounds, yet that is precisely what most of the essayists set out to do.

Thus, those essays which depart from received consensus are those which both challenge and expose *Blade Runner* precisely for its overreliance on exhausted clichés and conventional Hollywood plot devices, such as William M. Kolb's aforementioned "Script to Screen: *Blade Runner* in Perspective." Indeed, there is a noticeable paucity of essays which take an antagonistic stance to the film or challenge its ideological assumptions. David Desser's "Race, Space, and Class: The Politics of the SF Film from *Metropolis* to *Blade Runner*" comes close to such a posture, concluding that "while the film does not naively call for a mediation between opposed racial and class enemies, or a mere prizing of emotionalism over technocratic totalitarianism, it does not seem to offer a clear solution, either" (121).

As one might expect, certain relevant issues remain unexplored. For instance, a useful essay would have been one which places the film within the perspective of the film-makers' earlier and subsequent careers, particularly those of director Ridley Scott, primary screenwriter Hampton Fancher, and designers Syd Mead and Lawrence Paull. While there is an essay by Andrew Stiller on the importance of Vangelis's musical score, there is nothing whatsoever in the book about the contribution of cinematographer Jordan Cronenweth, whose participation in the production

must have been crucial, to say the least. (His name goes unmentioned in the index and in the essays.) These are hardly incidental issues in the critical discourse surrounding the film, because for many of the film-makers involved in the making of *Blade Runner*, the film is, so far, the high point of their careers. In this light, C. Carter Colwell's essay, "Primitivism in the Movies of Ridley Scott: *Alien & Blade Runner*," seems even more convincing given Ridley Scott's subsequent career, recently exhibited in *Thelma & Louise*, while Leonard G. Heldreth's essay, "The Cutting Edges of *Blade Runner*," seems less convincing.

Yet this plurality of discursive voices finally emerges as a positive aspect of the book: the sheer variety of critical approaches and perspectives represented in it remains compelling, and is more than enough to recommend it to film scholars. As a potential source book on the film—William M. Kolb's 43-page "Bibliography" of critical responses to the film, for example, is superb—one probably will never do better. The recent release of the director's cut of the film in theaters in San Francisco and Los Angeles in the fall of 1991, with added footage and alternate takes, and a rumored re-release of it in the fall of 1992, with entirely new scenes added, certainly suggests that at least a more than cult interest in the film continues. With such ongoing revision of the film proceeding—which is suggestive, again, of its remarkable status as a Hollywood motion picture—this book could not, finally, hope to be definitive. As a text rich in potential meanings, *Blade Runner* yet resists the critical acid bath; this only serves as a reminder of this book's ambitious goals.

SAM UMLAND

▪ Sam Umland teaches at the University of Nebraska at Kearney.

Schrader on Schrader & Other Writings

Edited by Kevin Jackson. Boston: Faber & Faber, 1990. $19.95.

Coming on the heels of Faber's flawed but fascinating volume on Martin Scorsese, *Schrader on Schrader* is a perceptive exploration of the life and work of the man behind such films as *Taxi Driver* and *Mishima*. Editor Kevin Jackson culls his information from exhaustive inverviews with Paul Schrader, as well as providing analysis and publication (in some cases republication) of a selection of Schrader's film criticism.

The volume is primarily composed of interviews which trace the disparate strands of Schrader's personal and professional life, from his strict Calvinist upbringing to his work as a film critic under the tutelage of Pauline Kael to his career as a financially and critically successful screenwriter and director. Jackson allows us to see how Schrader's strict religious upbringing influenced his criticism and screenwriting, as well as how his criticism influenced his writing and how his writing influenced his work as a director. It is to Jackson's credit that the entire book resembles autobiography as much as it does critical commentary or standard Q-&-A interviewing—his questions manage to be subtle and probing, eliciting totally candid responses from Schrader. Admittedly, much of this ground has been plowed by other sources, but this is the first time the bulk of this material has been compiled by a single interviewer and presented under one cover.

The eight critical pieces reprinted here are worth the cover price alone—they are a gold mine of hard-to-find essays that, as Jackson points out in his introduction, are not only fascinating for their connection to Schrader's later film work but also function as first-rate criticism in themselves. Noteworthy are Schrader's surprisingly unfavorable review of *Easy Rider* (a piece that got him fired from the *L.A. Free Press*) and a two-part column on Bresson's *Pickpocket*, one of the seminal influences on his later screenwriting. The only real problem with this section is Jackson's omission of two of Schrader's most important writings of this period: a 1969 piece from *Cinema* entitled "They're Young . . . They're in Love . . . They Kill People," which, as pointed out by Joel Bellman in *American Screenwriters*, prefigures the violent psychopathology Schrader would explore in scripts like *Taxi Driver* and *Rolling Thunder*; and Schrader's brilliant 1974 article "Yakuza-Eiga," a primer on the popular Japanese gangster film.

There are some problems: the bibliography is surprisingly incomplete; Jackson does not bother to give us a complete chronological listing of Schrader's film criticism, and many articles analyzing Schrader's output are also omitted. Also, there are several subjects that warrant more attention than Jackson gives them—a number of unproduced scripts are referred to, but none are discussed in any great detail. Jackson's casual treatment of these topics is maddening; anyone with a serious interest in all aspects of Schrader's writing is left craving more. However, *Schrader on Schrader*,

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although at times lacking the detail so essential for a study of this sort, is still an invaluable analysis of a body of work that has too long been looked at in pieces rather than as a whole.

SCOTT C. BRADLEY

■ Scott C. Bradley is a Missouri-based freelance writer.

Sidney Lumet
Film and Literary Vision

By Frank R. Cunningham. Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1991. $35.00.

At the conclusion of his competent and richly observed study of the films of Sidney Lumet, Frank Cunningham quotes Jean-Pierre Coursodon, who notes that Lumet has been the most prolific director of any of his contemporaries. Yet despite this, despite more than 30 years of making critically acclaimed and commercially successful films, Lumet has, until now with Cunningham's pioneering full-length study, almost escaped the notice of academic film criticism. This reveals a shocking conformity within the academy, for despite shifting paradigms (i.e., ever-changing fads) a remarkably constrained canon of directors rules the roost.

Cunningham writes in his acknowledgments of feeling rather isolated in the rural northern Midwest (he is a professor at the University of South Dakota). This isolation must be reckoned a positive blessing, for the most part. The book is structured by in-depth analyses of Lumet's many films adapted from literary sources (theater and novel). In addition, "literary" is one of Cunningham's highest compliments, as in the contention that many of Lumet's films which are not adapted from major literary sources still reflect a "literary seriousness and depth. . . ." There is something pleasingly old-fashioned as well in Cunningham's auteurist approach. He seems blissfully unconcerned with fashionable French "death of the author" poststructuralist, antihumanist criticism. The methodology of authorship that valorizes the individual creator (without ignoring collaboration—an impossibility in the case of Lumet with his penchant for adaptations) also extends to the prizing of the humanism which Cunningham claims is the hallmark of Lumet's varied canon.

For Cunningham, authorship means the presence of recurring motifs and character types throughout the course of Lumet's cinema. These motifs and characters are put in service of an overarching concern with the moral development of individuals within social and familial settings. Lumet is ultimately concerned with, and believes in, the possibility of meaningful action in the contemporary world. Authorship also means for Cunningham the director's skill in capturing the spirit of the literary work in cinematic terms. It is not a question for Cunningham of a consistent style, but rather Lumet's ability to communicate visually through camera movement and placement, production design and art direction, and an uncommon ability to work well with actors. Lumet's collaborations with the literary source, which is often a literal collaboration with the original writer (Tennessee Williams, E. L. Doctorow, for instance) also extends to the cinematographer and editor. A generous selection of Lumet's own sentiments, culled from previously published interviews and ones conducted with Lumet by Cunningham for this volume, certainly speak of a director of rare intelligence, grace, and commitment.

However, the author's isolation, not just in space but from much of contemporary film critical practice, hurts his arguments when he overly relies on film-reviewer adjectives. Thus an actor gives a "restrained, nuanced performance"; another actor's performance is "glitzy"; actors are forever "sensitively" or "skillfully" playing their roles, while an entire group of actors in one film deliver "scintillating performances." Lumet's contribution to films is also too frequently characterized by such clichés. How exactly does one direct an actor with "both tenderness and satiric bite"? This tendency is certainly at odds with the author's stated desire to eschew "impressionistic commentary," as he says early on and then reaffirms in the final chapter, where he lambasts the "critical commentary on Lumet [which] tends toward the general and subjective." Yet his own overreliance on film-reviewer speak surely stems from his implicit arguments throughout the book with much of the journalistic writing which has greeted Lumet's films. Cunningham wishes to be "scholarly" and to demonstrate that he has done his reading. And since little of an academic nature has been written about Lumet, journalistic discourse (some of it intelligent and useful still) suffices as a too-easy straw man for Cunningham to cut down to size. This reaches a kind of climax in the final chapter, where Cunningham takes on Andrew Sarris's assessment of Lumet from *The American Cinema* and Pauline Kael's commentaries in a *New Yorker* piece from the same period. But this

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Ultimately, however, Cunningham's strengths—his detailed comparisons and commentaries on book (or play) and film—far outweigh his weaknesses. More significantly, the particularities, even the question, of Lumet's authorship is less important than the fact that Lumet has collaborated on a nearly unprecedented number of films which engage themselves with contemporary social and political realities. Cunningham's book is not only a necessary and welcome first step toward according Lumet the scholarly attention he deserves, but also a fine place to begin the appreciation of our generation's most prolific major film-maker.

DAVID DESSER

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Tainted Goddesses
Female Film Stars of the Third Reich

By Cinzia Romani. Trans. by Robert Connolly. New York: Sarpedon, 1992. $19.95.

There is something irresistible about *Tainted Goddesses*, Cinzia Romani's sensitively written survey of female film stars of the Nazi cinema. Irresistible not in the sense of the *kitsch* to which Nazism itself succumbed and which surrounds its image today, but appealing and moving like a wartime melodrama of the 1940s. For beyond questions of guilt, collaboration, ethical and artistic responsibility, and the like, which must surround anyone who actively participated in the Nazi regime, is the simple human tragedy of people caught up in vastly confusing circumstances.

The image we tend to hold of Nazi cinema is that of Leni Riefenstahl's monumental tributes to Fascist aesthetics—*Triumph of the Will* and *Olympiad*, or the anti-Semitic drivel of films like *The Eternal Jew*, *Jud Süss*, or *The Rothschilds*. Yet of the more than 1,300 feature films produced by the Nazis, only a small minority (around 15 percent seems a reliable figure) were overtly propagandistic calls to arms. This is not to say that most of the films produced under the watchful eye of Joseph Goebbels and his Propaganda Ministry were harmless, ideologically free entertainments (as if there could be such a thing in any circumstances, and surely not under the Nazis). Yet there was some semblance of ordinary life in the Nazi era (how ordinary is part of a still-bitter ongoing "historians' debate" [*Historikerstreit*] in Germany today) and some residue of ordinary, commercial film-making. This film-making, like its Hollywood counterpart—indeed Goebbels modeled the restructured German film industry on Hollywood—was dominated by the star-genre system, and, like its Hollywood model, the Nazi cinema gloried in its female stars.

Tainted Goddesses first surveys the terrain of Nazi film-making in a useful, compact introduction, and follows this with entries devoted to 18 actresses—a short biographical survey up to the present (the Italian version was originally published in 1981), followed by discussions of representative films, the entire book satisfactorily illustrated. One cannot help but be struck by certain stars, such as Marianne Hoppe and Kristina Soderbaum. Like the ideologically determined women they played on screen, the two glamorous and talented stars stuck by their husbands in difficult times. Hoppe was married to Gustav Grundgens, who provided the model (exaggerated, it is felt) for Klaus Mann's *Mephisto*; Soderbaum was the loyal wife of Veit Harlan, Nazism's most notorious director (*Jud Süss*, for instance), and one of the few film-makers put on trial by the occupation authorities (both the U.S. and British authorities in separate cases). Similarly, one is fascinated to learn that one of the most beautiful and appealing of the Nazi-era stars was Brigitte Horney, whose mother was the internationally famous psychoanalyst Karen Horney (the ambivalent status of psychoanalysis as "the Jewish science" must have provided Brigitte with some interesting inner conflicts). Of course there is the case of Sybille Schmitz, famous, if at all, here for being the model for Fassbinder's enigmatic *Veronica Voss*. Outright tragedy may be found as well in the sad story of Renate Muller, star of the original *Victor and Victoria*, whom Goebbels tried to pair off with Hitler, and who died at the age of 30 in 1937, in what was probably a suicide during a hospital stay.

Romani has an obvious, and I think, understandable sympathy for her subjects. This, however, tends to allow her to gloss over instances where overt complicity (if not outright ideological sympathy) on the part of some of these actresses with the Nazi cause might appropriately be discussed. On the other hand, her

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discussion of the aesthetic failure of much (indeed most) Nazi cinema is perceptive. It is not simply that much of the talent behind and in front of the camera was second-rate (the Nazis were sorely distressed that Marlene Dietrich would not return to work in Germany, and that they could never find an actress of her caliber to replace her), but that the ideology of the regime itself removed the joy, the eroticism, of filmmaking, so that the large number of musicals and comedies of the Nazis lack the sexual energy so apparent and so wonderful in Hollywood musicals and comedies of the same era.

One is tempted to think, of course, of Kracauer's *From Caligari to Hitler* in these tales of film stars sucked into the Nazi nightmare. It is well known that Werner Krauss, who portrayed the menacing Hitler-like Caligari, was a major star of the Nazi cinema. But what of one of Caligari's victims, the ethereal Jane? She was inhabited by the photogenic Lil Dagover—another major star of the Nazi cinema, another tainted goddess.

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Techniques of the Observer
On Visions and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century

By Jonathan Crary. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1990. $24.95 cloth; $12.95 paper.

In this slim volume Jonathan Crary offers a work that defies genres and crossbreeds subject areas. Basically an essay (and displaying the sort of groundbreaking insight that seminal essays harbor), its erudition and scholarly apparatus aspire to a redefinition of the relations between modernity, modernism, and spectatorship that few tomes could tackle. Crary pioneers a new topography in the history of ideas, interrelating painters with philosophers and both with an emerging visual technology. Crary's work has unique relevance to contemporary film history and theory, proposing a new approach to the concept of the spectator (although he prefers the term "observer") so fundamental to recent film theory, and a new understanding of the origin of modern visual culture in the nineteenth century which constitutes the archeology of the cinema.

Crary reconsiders the origin of modernism in painting and its relation to its technological contemporaries, photography and the cinema. For many art historians (as well as film theorist André Bazin), the evolution of nonrepresentational modern painting can be at least partly explained as a reaction against the mimetic realism photography achieves through mechanical reproduction. This antimony between conservative illusionist technology and avant-garde explorations of an autonomous aesthetic leads, as Crary sees it, to a bifurcation of twentieth-century art into a "realist" technology which remained wedded to classical perspective and a radical alternative exploring a new visionary realm without reference to the world.

A corollary to this bifurcation sees the development of photography and cinema (and the host of visual devices which seem to serve as their harbingers) as the progressive fulfillment of an ideal of realistic mimesis (and again Bazin would be exemplary). This ideal proceeds through such incomplete avatars as the zoetrope and the stereoscope to the final realization of total cinema.

But such assumptions are not limited to a supposedly "idealist" theorist like Bazin. Crary allows us to realize that these same assumptions have simply been retooled by the supposedly anti-idealist apparatus theorists. For theorists such as Baudry and Heath, the cinematic apparatus has inscribed within its mimetic power and use of perspective an essentially timeless illusionary power. Even if apparatus theory condemned this realist impulse rather than celebrating it as Bazin had, idealist and "materialist" theorists share an essentially ahistorical view of the cinematic illusion. It is this ahistorical aspect of apparatus theory that Crary reveals and punctures.

Where Bazin and the apparatus theorists posit a continuous striving for a realist illusion and a dominating subject positioning, Crary, inspired by the historiography of Foucault, discovers rupture. And where historians of modern art find an opposition between a realist technology and anti-realist aesthetics, Crary finds—not an identity—but a complex pattern of intersection and overlap.

A large part of Crary's project consists of relating modernism in art to a broader social transformation, opening his investigation up to, as he puts it, "an organization of the visible that vastly exceeds the domain conventionally examined by art history." Crary's concept of the observer extends beyond the traditional trajectory that defines modernism (the rup-

discussion of the aesthetic failure of much (indeed most) Nazi cinema is perceptive. It is not simply that much of the talent behind and in front of the camera was second-rate (the Nazis were sorely distressed that Marlene Dietrich would not return to work in Germany, and that they could never find an actress of her caliber to replace her), but that the ideology of the regime itself removed the joy, the eroticism, of filmmaking, so that the large number of musicals and comedies of the Nazis lack the sexual energy so apparent and so wonderful in Hollywood musicals and comedies of the same era.

One is tempted to think, of course, of Kracauer's *From Caligari to Hitler* in these tales of film stars sucked into the Nazi nightmare. It is well known that Werner Krauss, who portrayed the menacing Hitler-like Caligari, was a major star of the Nazi cinema. But what of one of Caligari's victims, the ethereal Jane? She was inhabited by the photogenic Lil Dagover—another major star of the Nazi cinema, another tainted goddess.

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Techniques of the Observer
On Visions and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century

By Jonathan Crary. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1990. $24.95 cloth; $12.95 paper.

In this slim volume Jonathan Crary offers a work that defies genres and crossbreeds subject areas. Basically an essay (and displaying the sort of groundbreaking insight that seminal essays harbor), its erudition and scholarly apparatus aspire to a redefinition of the relations between modernity, modernism, and spectatorship that few tomes could tackle. Crary pioneers a new topography in the history of ideas, interrelating painters with philosophers and both with an emerging visual technology. Crary's work has unique relevance to contemporary film history and theory, proposing a new approach to the concept of the spectator (although he prefers the term "observer") so fundamental to recent film theory, and a new understanding of the origin of modern visual culture in the nineteenth century which constitutes the archeology of the cinema.

Crary reconsiders the origin of modernism in painting and its relation to its technological contemporaries, photography and the cinema. For many art historians (as well as film theorist André Bazin), the evolution of nonrepresentational modern painting can be at least partly explained as a reaction against the mimetic realism photography achieves through mechanical reproduction. This antimony between conservative illusionist technology and avant-garde explorations of an autonomous aesthetic leads, as Crary sees it, to a bifurcation of twentieth-century art into a "realist" technology which remained wedded to classical perspective and a radical alternative exploring a new visionary realm without reference to the world.

A corollary to this bifurcation sees the development of photography and cinema (and the host of visual devices which seem to serve as their harbingers) as the progressive fulfillment of an ideal of realistic mimesis (and again Bazin would be exemplary). This ideal proceeds through such incomplete avatars as the zoetrope and the stereoscope to the final realization of total cinema.

But such assumptions are not limited to a supposedly "idealist" theorist like Bazin. Crary allows us to realize that these same assumptions have simply been retooled by the supposedly anti-idealist apparatus theorists. For theorists such as Baudry and Heath, the cinematic apparatus has inscribed within its mimetic power and use of perspective an essentially timeless illusionary power. Even if apparatus theory condemned this realist impulse rather than celebrating it as Bazin had, idealist and "materialist" theorists share an essentially ahistorical view of the cinematic illusion. It is this ahistorical aspect of apparatus theory that Crary reveals and punctures.

Where Bazin and the apparatus theorists posit a continuous striving for a realist illusion and a dominating subject positioning, Crary, inspired by the historiography of Foucault, discovers rupture. And where historians of modern art find an opposition between a realist technology and anti-realist aesthetics, Crary finds—not an identity—but a complex pattern of intersection and overlap.

A large part of Crary's project consists of relating modernism in art to a broader social transformation, opening his investigation up to, as he puts it, "an organization of the visible that vastly exceeds the domain conventionally examined by art history." Crary's concept of the observer extends beyond the traditional trajectory that defines modernism (the rup-

ture of Renaissance perspective from Manet through the high modernism of the early part of this century) to what he describes as a broader and more important transformation of vision that began in the early part of the nineteenth century. This transformation can be located both in the literal technology of vision and, more tellingly, in the discourse which defines this technology, constructing new techniques of the observer. Crary describes this transformation through a contrast between the camera obscura and the visual technology which appears in the nineteenth century.

Long seen as the predecessor of photography, the camera obscura consisted of a dark chamber into which a single small aperture admits daylight. This aperture projects onto the wall of the chamber an inverted image of the sunlit world outside. While Crary discusses the technical evolution and uses of the camera obscura, his main interest lies in the way this device offered (in the works of Locke, Descartes, and other classical thinkers) a metaphor for the relation between subjectivity and the world. The camera obscura with its enclosed space of representation visualized a metaphysics of interiority, with the observer understood as contemplating and examining the images of the world, whose veracity and stability were guaranteed by the natural operation of this monocular decorporalized visual device. Operating under the sway of this model, the subject was put in contact with a world not through physical contact but through a stable and ordered relation of representation between inner and outer worlds.

In the nineteenth century, Crary claims, such stability came under siege from new demands for the mobility, abstraction, and control created by nascent capitalism and industrialism which define modernity. Romantic models of perception turned away from the camera obscura's guarantees that the interior matched the exterior and began to explore the subjective contributions made by the observer's imagination and physiology. While this romantic valuation of the subjective is often seen as one of the sources of modernism's rupture of classical space, Crary's originality lies in interrelating it to the nineteenth century's technical investigation of the physiology of perception. The model for perception no longer parallels the rational and disembodied vision of the camera obscura but rather founds itself on an actual examination and, in Foucault's sense, discipline of the physical organs of the senses.

Nineteenth-century physiology undertook what Crary calls an exhaustive inventory of the body with the purpose of constructing an individual adequate to the productive requirements of an economic modernity guided by a scientific rationalization. Instead of a unified interior self who examines and judges representations of the outside world (as in Locke's use of the camera obscura image), the modern individual constructed by physiology was dissolved into competing systems of senses which often bore only ambiguous relations to outside stimuli. The modern observer was abstracted from the stability of the camera obscura and classical space and made over into the site of continual exchanges of "commodities, energies, capital, images or information."

The "philosophical toys," devices that produced optical illusions of motion or three-dimensionality, resulted directly from these physiological investigations, usually as demonstrations of recently discovered properties of vision. In contrast to the camera obscura, such devices claimed no access to a stable reality. Rather, the realism they produced fascinated observers precisely through its illusory power, recreating a realistic simulacrum independent of an actual referent. The physiology of the eye, the body of the observer herself, produced the superimposed images of the thaumascope, the apparent motion of the phenakistoscope, or the three-dimensional illusion of the stereoscope. Instead of an image of the tangible exterior world created by the reassuring illumination of sunlight, these visual devices cast light on the dark processes of the body, the ability of perception to be manipulated divorced from an actual referential reality.

The stereoscope presents the clearest image of this new physiological observer. This omnipresent Victorian parlor amusement presented the illusion of a three-dimensional image by allowing the observer to perceptually superimpose two slightly different images whose parallax mimed that of binocular vision. This recreation of the effect of depth contrasts sharply with the camera obscura, whose single aperture transcended the accidents of human vision. Traditionally, such pursuit of the third dimension is seen as utterly at odds with the exclusion of the third dimension from modern painting. However, Crary offers a careful phenomenological reading of the depth effect of the stereoscopic image. Rather than offering the organized and unified space produced by classical perspective, the stereoscope presents depths as a series of planes, with objects separated into oddly flattened layers. As Crary describes it, the stereoscope image presents "a fundamentally disunified and aggregate field of disjunct elements," a specifically optical space, independent of haptic experience.

Crary interrelates such new explorations of vision with the subjective exploration of nonclassical space

by proto-modernist painters such as Turner. Modernist painting rests upon a transformation of vision that abstracted it from the stable references of the camera obscura, constructing an observer whose body was important precisely for the way it could be examined, quantified, fooled, and controlled.

Crary's thesis breathtakingly ruptures the myth that three-dimensional illusionism has a constant ahistorical significance. In contrast, the critique of illusionism in contemporary film theory has frequently simply adopted the idealist assumptions it claimed to be critiquing, constructing ahistorical models of representation. Crary opens up a new way of interrogating such concepts. Such an achievement deserves acclamation, but there are limits to the book as it stands. For such a wide-ranging reconfiguration of the history of modern art, questions of mediation loom. Crary brings together a great deal of material in an original and illuminating way, but exactly how the elements interrelate remains in some ways obscure. Does Crary offer here a relation between economic base and cultural superstructure, with the economic demands of modernism entailing the ideological transformations he discusses? He often seems to imply this, but then the dates seem somewhat askew, with important ideological changes (such as Goethe's color theory) preceding the development of industrialism. Similarly, is modern painting to be seen as an expression of the abstraction of modernity or as a resistance to it? One cannot fault Crary for leaving such daunting questions unanswered, but they need to be brought into focus.

My admiration for this work does not prevent me from wishing that it paid more attention to the methods Foucault lays out in *The Archeology of Knowledge* rather than appropriating the conclusions of *Discipline and Punish*. Crary moves swiftly between different institutions and types of discourse and interrelates them freely. The sort of constraints that Foucault called for against the universalizing tendencies of the traditional history of ideas (which uncovered broad zeitgeists beneath a variety of manifestations), are not always evident in Crary's work. Although he pays exemplary attention to the discursive aspects of everything he examines, the institutional constraints, the principles of what Foucault calls discursive formations, are not always explored thoroughly.

If one feels Crary's thesis needs further development, I believe this comes partly from the gap between the scale of this work's ambition and its actual length. Crary proposes a radical new topography, and if there are issues still to be resolved, this may simply testify to the fertile nature of his project. I believe that anyone seriously interested in the theorization of the cinema spectator or in the history of early film must read this book.

TOM GUNNING

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Technoculture

Edited by Constance Penley and Andrew Ross. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991. $39.95 cloth; $15.95 paper.

Technoculture doesn't waste much time worrying about what "technoculture" is. For the most part, the contributions that Penley and Ross have gathered in this volume get right to the task of giving a political "assessment" of what is at stake "in those cultural practices touched by advanced technology" (xii). These assessments are, moreover, almost exclusively concerned with a political, technological praxis: they focus on practical techniques for "creating technological countercultures," on the *tactics of* establishing a *critical* "technoliteracy."

Much of what is refreshing about *Technoculture* is, therefore, based on this almost impatient desire to "get down to cases," to concentrate on examples of "countercultural" uses and remotivations of Western technoculture, from amateur video production to "hacker counterculture" to "raptechnology" to AIDS activists' uses of the media. This emphasis on practices, however, does not come at the expense of theory; indeed, many of the better pieces collected in *Technoculture* manage to match their examples with broader theoretical insights into the relations of advanced technology and contemporary culture. Perhaps most noteworthy in this regard is "Cyborgs at Large," Penley and Ross's interview with Donna Haraway, whose work has included the influential "A Manifesto for Cyborgs" and the more recent *Primate Visions* and *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women*. The interview and the succeeding postscript by Haraway, "The Actors Are Cyborg, Nature Is Coyote, and the Geography Is Elsewhere," provide a succinct entry point to Haraway's almost uncategorizable work, which moves between feminist theory and women's studies, political and cultural theory, and the history, culture, and politics of

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science and technology. The interview and postscript also foreground the far-reaching political implications of Haraway's work, which, in attempting to rethink the relations of nature, culture, and technology in terms that are neither simply positivist nor relativist, also attempts what Haraway refers to as "a kind of science fictional move" (3): "imagining possible worlds," possible relations, and ways of being that, like the cyborg, involve a nonutopian interpenetration of nature and technology, self and other.

To some extent, then, Haraway's attempts to *theorize* a cultural politics that is "not just contestatory, not always oppositional, but something often more creative and playful and positive" (8) can be seen as informing the various examinations of technocultural practices in *Technoculture*. In, for example, "Brownian Motion: Women, Tactics and Technology," Constance Penley's provocative look at the rereading and rewriting of *Star Trek* by female fans, we can see, precisely, a demonstration of a "science fictional" practice, one that is defined not simply by its opposition to a mainstream reading—in this case, of Kirk's and Spock's sexuality—but by its creation, made possible by videotape and desktop-publishing technology, of an "imagined world" that is a positive representation of these fans' desires. Similarly, Houston A. Baker Jr.'s "Hybridity, the Rap Race, and Pedagogy for the 1990s" looks at the hybrid (= cyborg?) creative empowerments enabled by "raptechnology." Andrew Ross's contribution attempts to retrieve the political subtext of "hacker counterculture," taking "hackers' knowledge" as a model for interacting with technoculture and for "generating new popular romances around the alternative uses of human ingenuity" (132). Paula Treichler's "How to Have Theory in an Epidemic" examines the media-savvy "contributions of AIDS activism" to the ongoing debate "about the uses and consequences of technology and biomedical theory in everyday life," a debate that is, as Treichler notes, inevitably concerned with "the evolution, value, and possible limits of a radically democratic technoculture" (58). At an even more practical level, DeeDee Halleck's and the *Processed World* Collective's contributions give histories and working instructions on the creative use of low-budget video and media technologies grounded in Halleck's experience as one of the founders of Paper Tiger Television and in *Processed World* magazine, started as a "forum" and "creative outlet" for disaffected office workers. Here, again, *Processed World's* opening editorial statement that "Rebellion can be fun, and humor subversive" (238) echoes Haraway's notion of a "more creative and playful and positive" cultural politics. Also concerned with the creative political use of new technologies, although somewhat less successful in their analyses, are Jim Pomeroy's overview of "techno-art" (e.g., Mark Pauline) and Reebee Garafolo's look at "Mega-Events" (e.g., Live Aid).

The remaining essays of *Technoculture* can be seen as taking a slightly different approach. Valerie Hartouni's "Containing Women: Reproductive Discourse in the 1980s" is basically an analysis of media representations of motherhood and reproductive technologies which, although less concerned with the "creative use" of technologies, is nevertheless instructive. More suggestive, however, is Sandra Buckley's analysis of Japanese erotic and pornographic comic books, "'Penguin in Bondage': A Graphic Tale of Japanese Comic Books," which touches on some of the same questions concerning representations of women's desires as Penley's essay. Finally, Peter Fitting's "The Lessons of Cyberpunk" looks at the cultural politics of cyberpunk, particularly the work of William Gibson; although the essay gives an excellent summary of cyberpunk concerns, its political analysis fails to move beyond conventional assessments.

On the whole, then, *Technoculture is* a highly entertaining and useful collection. It is not, however, without its flaws. Indeed, its flaws are very much connected to its strengths. For example, nowhere does the book question what "technoculture" might be, or what changes in culture or technology have occurred to bring it into existence. One hint as to the nature of this odd repression is the fact that "technoculture" has been a term much used by Jean Baudrillard, whose name also does not appear anywhere in this volume. What seems to be hidden, then, in the non-definition of "technoculture" is its link to "postmodernism," with which Baudrillard's name has been so much associated. Yet *Technoculture's* attempt to dissociate itself from the term "postmodernism" is, in the end, less troubling than its refusal to consider seriously the question on which both it and postmodernity are founded: the question concerning not just the "uses" of technology, but how our very conception of technology seems to have changed.

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The reader might wonder how the 26 entries were selected—for the list includes not only recent books on the movement (such as those by Millicent Marcus, Mira Liehm, and Peter Bondanella) and historically influential works (e.g., by Bazin and Leprohon), but also outdated one-volume general texts (like Arthur Knight's *The Liveliest Art* and my own *Close-up*, cowritten with Beverle Houston). Yet it omits (even from the exhaustive biblio) Robert Kolker's *The Altering Eye*, which argues that neorealism represents a crucial "pivot" in film history. Similarly, although it includes an assortment of articles and interviews on individual film-makers and films, it omits Peter Brunette's *Roberto Rossellini*, which contributes important new ideas on the movement. Nor does Cardullo explain why his chronology excludes pre-1956 neorealist works by Fellini and Antonioni, or why it privileges origins and precursors over subsequent influences at home and abroad (including latter-day Italian neorealists like Rosi, Olmi, and the Taviani brothers). It may well be this pervasive influence that made the movement so important. MARSHA KINDER

Denisoff, R. Serge, and William D. Romanowski. *Risky Business: Rock in Film*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers, 1991. $49.95. With almost 800 pages, this is the most ambitious book on rock-and-roll and film so far published. It is valuable in two ways. First, as a work of reference, it provides for each of 150 films the history of its production, a plot summary, an overview of reviews, and an account of the financial return of both the film and the records associated with it—all in very great detail. Second, as a guidebook through the corridors of the culture industries, it traces the history of the ways the media have become totally integrated as industries, beginning from the halting first steps at accommodation in the late 1950s and maturing in the late 1970s in the "synergy" (an industry term) by which the music, film, and eventually video divisions of entertainment corporations have subsequently fed off each other.

It is relatively unconcerned with formal, theoretical, or ideological matters. Perhaps inevitably, some genres are slighted: rockumentaries (concert documentaries) are bundled into an inadequate epilogue, as are blaxploitation films; Presley's entire 1960s work is ignored, and his one great film, *King Creole*, is never mentioned. The book's more than occasional typos and minor errors are annoying, and while for some its *Variety*-aping style will come as a welcome relief from the aridity of scholarly prose, others will be irritated by it. But this is a small price to pay for what is a veritable treasure trove of information that will be indispensable for the foreseeable future.

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Fischer, Lucy (ed.). *Imitation of Life: Douglas Sirk, director*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1991. $37.00 cloth; $14.00 paper. Another entry in the Rutgers *Films in Print* series of continuity scripts. The series does not publish the "shooting" scripts but instead an accurate description of the completed film. Though I don't understand why Rutgers doesn't publish the historically more interesting record of the actual script—we do, after all, have the film itself as a record of what was shot—there is little else to fault in these 346 pages of rich material. Editor Lucy Fischer offers a fine introductory essay, a biographical sketch of Sirk, and a variety of reviews: there are classic essays on Sirk by Jon Haliday, Fassbinder, Fred Camper, and Paul Willemen as well as newer essays by Marina Heung and Sandy Flitterman-Lewis. Essays by Richard Dyer and Charles Affron on star acting add a great deal to the collection. (Dyer's 1977 *Movie* article, "Four Films by Lana Turner," is especially valuable for its explanation of the peculiar appeal of that icy cold star.) But the real coup of the book is Fischer's inclusion of several segments of Fannie Hurst's 1933 novel on which both films were based and two short essays, one by Fannie Hurst about Zora Neale Hurston, and one by Hurston about Hurst. Though the lively Hurston was no model for the long-suffering character of the black maid Annie, she was once Hurst's secretary and chauffeur. The brief glimpse into the dynamics of the friendship between the fashionable, wealthy, older white woman writer and her eccentric, poor, young black employee, who we know by now to have been the much more interesting writer, are fascinating. I wish I could see that movie! LINDA WILLIAMS

Furmanek, Bob, and Ron Palumbo. *Abbott & Costello in Hollywood*. New York: Perigee Books, 1991. $16.95. At this writer's count, we have here the fifth book devoted to Abbott and Costello. It is also the definitive study. This film-by-film account of the duo's work includes, for each film, background information on the script and production, capsule bios on the principal supporting players, deletions and additions that occurred prior to release, contemporary reviews from several sources, and a postscript which adds still more new information not published in any of the previous studies. Problems? Only the fact that the many wonderful photos used to illustrate *Abbott & Costello in Hollywood* are reduced to postage-stamp size, which emphasizes the text but makes it hard to see such interesting pix as Bud and Lou attending the premiere of *Abbott and Costello Meet The Invisible Man* with Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis (Lewis also writes the book's Introduction). The text was given the cooperation and full approval of the Abbott and Costello children (who were reportedly dismayed by most of the previous studies). JAMES L. NEIBAUR

Gomery, Douglas. *Movie History: A Survey*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1990. $33.75. Generally a textbook for an introductory college-level film course, this study is significant in that it is divided into chronological sections so that students can better understand film's evolutionary process. The 14 chapters—beginning with the early experiments of Edison and Lumière and concluding with an epilogue examining contemporary film history—are presented in three sections: The Silent Cinema (1895–1927), The Hollywood Studio Era (1928–1950), and The Television Era (1951–1975). While there is an emphasis on the American cinema, important European films are examined as alternatives to Hollywood in the pre-W.W. II, post-W.W. II, and contemporary eras. This book eschews the overly academic prose that causes so many potentially good film texts to appear stilted, but there are aspects of the cinema that seemed glossed over. For instance, when discussing film genres during the golden age of moviemaking, each genre is given an average of about three pages, with no films being adequately analyzed. But on the plus side, the author is among the few to examine the business end of Hollywood, with much detail on the studio system, film distribution, and the impact television had on the movies. J. L. N.

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80 performers, Katchmer finds room for only two women—Ruth Roland and Ruth Mix. J. L. N.

Lax, Eric. *Woody Allen: A Biography*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991. $24.00. It may surprise many to learn that Woody Allen has been the subject of more books in English (by far) than any contemporary film-maker, although he has never been associated with a blockbuster film. And if he is respected as a film-maker by his peers and by many in the academy, he still seems more influenced by (Bergman, Fellini) than influencer. The explanation may lie in the fact that Allen, at least as I have come to interpret and understand his films, is essentially a regional film-maker—but the region is New York. Notorious for its skewed vision of itself vis-à-vis the rest of America, New York is the headquarters of the publishing industry, not to mention so much of the business side of the film industry, not to mention its claim to be the cultural capital of the U.S. Thus Eric Lax, an early appreciator of Allen's (*On Being Funny: Woody Allen and Comedy*, 1975) can present his subject with a wealth of biographical detail and virtually no critical perspective. To the committed Allenite, the book offers further proof and specificity of the autobiographical derivations of many of his films. Along the way, the details of Allen's career in television writing and stand-up comedy are filled in to good use for an understanding of Allen's traditions and resources. A final, lengthy chapter on working methods supplements (even while it confirms) Ralph Rosenblum's feisty self-aggrandizements in *When the Shooting Stops*. The book, however, becomes a too-willing participant in Allen's strange attempt to reconfigure his image away from the neurotic New York Jew into a more generalizable beloved Everyman. A biographer needs some distance, some perspective, on his subject, and should not allow him to dictate the terms of the discourse.

DAVID DESSER

Leondopoulos, Jordan. *Still the Moving World:* Intolerance, *Modernism and* Heart of Darkness. New York: Peter Lang, 1991. $40.95. A film editor *(The Exorcist)* turned English professor, Leondopoulos proposes reinterpreting Griffith's film as a modernist work, using the Conrad novel for a like-minded frame of reference. The author writes with erudite grace; his *Heart of Darkness* chapter is a delight. *Intolerance*, he argues, is fragmented like *The Waste Land*, judged incoherent like Pound's *Cantos*, and preoccupied like many modernist texts with repetitive time frames, stirred by underlying pessimism to overlap characters, situations, and emotions from widely separated periods. Although not cited, my *Film and the Narrative Tradition* appears in Leondopoulos's bibliography. I'd like to think that his book expands usefully on my postulations, but I wish too that circumstances of *Intolerance*'s production had commanded some attention. By Joseph Henabery's testimony, the stories expanded item by item, starting from a near-completed *The Mother and the Law*, exploding outward with leaps of ambition. Anita Loos' contributions to the intertitles certainly imposed a sensibility very unlike Griffith's. And there's the sticky matter of which *Intolerance* is being discussed. Russell Merritt notes that for the 1921 version Griffith excised references to "intolerance" and added "fate." His comments appear in an extraordinarily detailed essay on the movie's many lives, printed in *Film History*, vol. 4, no. 4 (1990), which incidentally may be that fine journal's last issue. J. F.

Loukides, Paul, and Linda K. Fuller (eds.). *Beyond the Stars, Volume 2: Plot Conventions in American Film*. Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1991. $39.95 cloth; $18.95 paper. Contributors read the book's title broadly, suggesting more than once that a Plot Convention just amounts to some commonality out of which variations can be tweezed and mounted. Hence *Events* (a wedding, Christmas); *Social Mores* (interracial love, comic culture clash); *Subgenre* (baseball, comic supernatural, politics, invasion in sci fi); *Motif* (celebrating the family). The essays touching most closely on plot include considerations of dreams, of song in screwball comedy, and of conversion in war films. The last conjures various character motivations as each is explicated in story, although its examples curiously omit *The Red Badge of Courage*. Surely Stephen Crane relates to this subject like Owen Wister to the Western. Untypical (and refreshing) articles on Hollywood dream sequences and on horror conventions include references to cameras and to editing devices. Nobody thinks much about sound tracks. Emphasis overall rests on everybody's favorite nowadays, interpretive phenomenology. J. F.

Peters, Margot. *The House of Barrymore*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1991. $15.00. This is the definitive biography of the Barrymores, mostly about Ethel, Lionel, and John, from birth to death, and it is also a brilliant tapestry of American theater, its manners and immoralities. It may surprise some readers that Ethel's life is the least known and has the greatest drama. John's erratic career has been well publicized, and onscreen it is possible to trace his downfall by simply seeing the ravages of dissolution arrive and increase on his face and form. Each one in this trio of talented siblings reveals the underlying tragedies of stardom and the cupidity of Hollywood's studio system. After reading the separate autobiographies of Lionel and Ethel, one can find so much here that was scrupulously omitted, and John's chaotic life is movingly described, better than by any of Ms. Peters' predecessors. Lionel's devotion to a totally selfish and anorexic fash-

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SIDNEY GOTTLIEB

Schwartz, Ronald. *The Great Spanish Films: 1950–1990.* Metuchen, N.J.: The Scarecrow Press, 1991. $32.50. This is a sequel to Schwartz's earlier reference work, *Spanish Film Directors (1950–1985).* Though most of the brief commentaries are as superficial and derivative as those in the earlier volume, it provides a convenient source for credits, plot summaries, and essential facts—especially for those writing program notes for screenings of Spanish films. Curiously, though Schwartz acknowledges in his preface that his chronological list represents "a personal selection" of "significant films" and that "some . . . are not masterpieces" and "others may even be considered mediocre," by the time he gets to his appendix he tells us that the preceding sections have been limited "to the truly 'great' Spanish films," whereas the supplemental list that follows (also from the 1950s through the 1980s and similarly in chronological order) includes merely those that are "noteworthy" and that show "even more variety." To add to our confusion, this supplemental list includes what are generally considered some of the most distinguished Spanish films of all time—such as Berlanga's *Placido*, Franco's *Pascual Duarte*, Saura's *Cria Cuervos*, Gutierrez Aragon's *El Corazón del bosque, Demons in the Garden,* and *Half of Heaven*, and Almodóvar's *Matador, Law of Desire,* and *Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown.* M. K.

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Sinyard does contribute some useful insights (though a sketchy one on childhood in Roeg's work, provoked by *Track 29*, demands elaboration). His essay on *Eureka*, particularly, I found helpful. All too often, however, Sinyard simply gets carried away. Writing of *Track 29*, he racks up three confidently stated errors of interpretation in the space of one paragraph. He opines first that Martin, Linda Henry's mysterious visitor, appears at her poolside "when she is contemplating suicide after another sexless night with her husband." In fact, Linda seems to be *attempting* suicide, not contemplating it, and not because of her "sexless night." Martin does not "inadvertently" smash Henry's train set, and Henry is not "seen at the end vainly calling out to Linda as she leaves the house"—rather, we *hear* his voice, and it's left open as to whether he's actually calling out or if his voice is heard only in Linda's mind. There are simply too many of these misjudgments for a volume this slim on a director as careful as Roeg.
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Van Houten, Theodore. *Leonid Trauberg and His Films.* ZJ Buren, Netherlands: Frits Knuf Publishers, 1989. N.p. *Eisenstein Was Great Eater: In Memory of Leonid Trauberg.* NJ Buren, Netherlands: Frits Knuf Publishers, 1991. N.p. A book-length study of the films of (Grigori) Kosintsev (1904–1973) and Trauberg (1901–1990)—and their Leningrad-based FEX studio—is a long-standing lack. This book, unfortunately, does not begin to fill it, even though a chapter is devoted to each of the duo's main films: The *Devil's Wheel* (1926), *The Cloak* (1926), *S. V. D. (The Union of the Big Deed)* (1927), *New Babylon* (1929), *Alone* (1931), *The Maxim Trilogy* (1935–1939), and (Trauberg alone) *The Actress* (1942). More a writer of film notes rather than a critic, van Houten lapses continually from analysis to chronicle and tends to fill out his chapters with trivia. More useful by far are 44 pages

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ographies. While the memoirs of Capra, Kazan, and Powell were huge and juicy testaments to the qualities that made their authors' films so distinctive (varying proportions of ego, artistic ambition, and love for the cinema), this coffee-table compendium of notes on Zinnemann's 30 years of prestige cinema is as anonymous as his films. For instance, he reports the cancellation three days before shooting a film, *Man's Fate*, which he had labored on for three years—a cancellation that moreover threatened him with bankruptcy and ruin—without a word on his personal feelings. His memoir is equally silent on his life in general and his feelings for his work in particular.

This said, Zinnemann seems to have worked hard and behaved well throughout his career, which did after all produce several handsome films. If I sound churlish in my comments on such a patently decent man, consider his comment on CinemaScope (a format whose challenge directors like Kazan—as Zinnemann acknowledges—met with élan): "This ridiculous format . . . viewers' eyes went roaming over those acres of screen. . . . I remember spending much time inventing large foreground pieces to hide at least one-third of the screen." I rest my case.

G. R.

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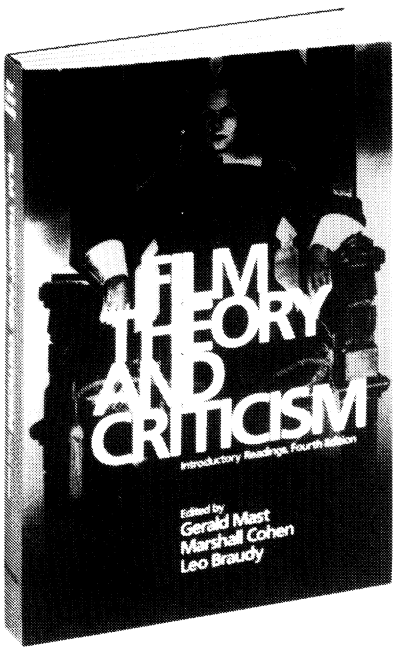

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